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ABSTRACT

A compilation of papers from a joint Finnish-Russian seminar on problems of communication research, this collection presents diverse opinions and results from researchers and observers in both countries. The titles of the papers and their authors are as follows: (1) "Role of Research and Training in Mass Communication and Public Opinion" (Pertti Hemanus); (2) "PRSS and Public Opinion: Relationship in the Process of Restructuring" (V. S. Korobeinikov); (3) "Two Versions of What Public Opinion Means" (Kauko Pietila); (4) "The Role of Mass Communication Media in Forming Public Opinion and Democratization of Life in the Workers' Collectives" (G. Sillaste); (5) "The Concentration of Finnish Newspapers" (Jyrki Jyrkiainen); (6) "TV and Public Opinion: Problems of Interaction" (A. Gagarkin and O. Kushnereva); (7) "Mass Media and Public Opinion: Problems of Interaction" (V. A. Mansurov); (8) "Role of Mass Media in Formation of Self-Consciousness of Subjects of Public Opinion" (M. Lauristin and P. Vihalemm); (9) "How the Finns Reacted to the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident" (Pertti Suhonen and Hannu Virtanen); (10) "Mass Information and Public Opinion" (I. D. Fomicheva); (11) "Images of the Soviet Union among Finnish Youth" (Pentti Raittila); (12) "Content Analysis in International Comparative Studies" (E. T. Bashkirova); (13) "Mass Media: Function of Public Opinion Expression" (V. D. Voinova); and (14) "The Role of Information in Public Opinion Formation" (A. N. Vlasova). (SR)

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MASS MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

24/1988

Report of the Fifth Soviet-Finnish seminar

TAMPEREEN YLIOPISTO • TIEDOTUSOPIN LAITOS

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

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Pertti Hemánus

OPENING REMARKS

Dear colleagues and friends!

I hope you will let me start with a few words from a rather egocentric point of view.

My previous visit to the Soviet Union was six months ago, when I travelled with a delegation to Duzanbe, the capital of the Soviet republic of Tadzikistan. What did I experience there? Among other things, the spirit of **glasnost**, the new openness.

Let me take just a couple of examples. During our visit, a young economist told us about the Tadzik economy. One of the members of our delegation asked him what were the most difficult economic problems in Tadzikistan. Without hesitation, he said: Productivity levels in Tadzikistan are next to last among all Soviet republics.

Upon my return I described these experiences in my column in a Tampere newspaper, expressing my doubts as to whether the representatives of our capitalist economy in Tampere would be as open and honest if their foreign guests asked them about their present economic and social problems, such as unemployment. In other words, I was asking whether we too would need more glasnost in Finland.

Another example. Yesterday I slightly reorganized the programme of our Finnish delegation, as we had the opportunity to visit the Press Centre of the Soviet Foreign Ministry. Mr. Gennadi Gerasimov, the Ministry's Head of Information, has a briefing with the foreign press twice a week, and yesterday he was unable to meet us. Therefore the Centre's number two man, Mr. Boris Pjadyshev, kindly took over and answered our questions.

The atmosphere of our meeting was very open and relaxed, even though some of our questions were actually quite provocative. Mr. Pjadyshev answered all of them, sometimes with the kind of dry humour you only expect to hear from Britons; glasnost again, I suppose.

Many of our questions concerned the opinion poll conducted in Moscow by the Institute for Sociological Research, in which the

aim was to measure public attitudes towards the Soviet government's disarmament initiatives. Our delegation concretely and vividly experienced the importance of your work. There is no doubt whatsoever that it is greatly appreciated by the Soviet authorities.

(Incidentally, some of the Western journalists present were clearly hard put to accept the fact that people in Moscow, according to the poll, so fully support their government.)

Coming back to the concepts of glasnost and **perestroika**, you may know that in some situations the Western mass media use these terms as general slogans today, in contexts which are not necessarily related to the Soviet conditions. But I know that in the Soviet Union these are not only slogans; here they are living reality.

I hope that our seminar will be held in the genuine spirit of glasnost. I also hope that, in spite of the short time we have at our disposal, we will be able to discuss the problems of the mass media and public opinion thoroughly and in genuinely scientific terms.

With these words, I declare the seminar opened.

Pertti Hemánus

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH AND TRAINING
IN MASS COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

The theme I intend to discuss in my paper is broad and demanding. To be able to focus our interest on the main issues, it is necessary to structure the discussion around certain central theoretical concepts. Otherwise, we would have to content ourselves with a purely empirical description - and that would be most uneconomical.

The concepts I propose are neither new nor revolutionary, but nevertheless I think they are worth considering. To the best of my knowledge, these concepts were first introduced by Paul F. **Lazarsfeld**, a German sociologist and mass communication researcher who moved to the United States when the Nazis seized power in the 1930s. In the early 1940s, he divided the field of mass communication research into two subfields: **administrative** and **critical**.

What does this distinction mean? I shall try to illustrate the difference and also what these concepts may have to offer us today. It is important to bear in mind that all my considerations concern and all my examples are taken from Western or capitalist societies. - I hope to hear in our discussion whether Lazarsfeld's dichotomy could be of some use in the scientific community of socialist societies as well - say, in the Soviet Union during the era of **perestroika** and **glasnost**.

I shall discuss research and training in mass communication and research and training in public opinion separately, although I am well aware that these fields of studies and training actually go very closely together. I do this merely to help structure the problem.

What does administrative research and training in mass communication mean? We might start from the following ideas:

1. The purpose of **training** is to **reproduce** the professional techniques and skills of journalists and other groups working in the mass communication industry. In other words, training is necessary for transmitting these techniques

and skills from the older generation to the younger one. Research is subordinated to the same aim: its purpose is to clarify how the mass media work, what their contents are, how they are received and understood by audiences, and how they influence the recipients and society at large. This is the horizon of administrative research at its best.

2. The main problems in research and training of the administrative type fall under the category of instrumental rationality, referring to the theoretical concepts of the world-famous sociologist Max Weber. How does one write a newspaper article which is as understandable and as useful as possible? How does one produce a political radio programme which in a competitive situation attracts as many listeners as possible? How does one make a Saturday evening TV show which appeals to the widest range of viewers? These are the kind of problems I am referring to. Of course, it is not by chance that my examples emphasize the necessity to sell mass media messages, because in the capitalist system this is central indeed - and instrumental rationality is to a great extent determined by that necessity.

3. The functions of research and training of the administrative type are also many-faceted. Personally, I am not very interested in their subjective functions, i.e. in the different claims of, say, the trainers and researchers themselves concerning the consequences of their work. I consider the objective functions more relevant, those which we would find in an honest and competent theoretical and empirical analysis. I believe this would lead us to discover the affirmative nature of both training and research: they do not only reproduce technical skills, but also the ideological contents of the field.

But what is the alternative to administrative research and training?

1. A critical approach in our field requires not only the reproduction of professional techniques and skills - although that is also necessary - but also a critical analysis of their essence. As far as I can see this is the only way towards better techniques and skills. What is better and what is worse is, of

course, something that can only be solved in open discussions.

2. In critical research and training **value rationality** - Max Weber's term again - is equally important as that of instrumental rationality. One example. Writing an article or a story in a newspaper is not only a matter of techniques, skills and form, but also of the values inherent in its content.

3. Critical research and training in mass communication and public opinion does not deserve its name if it contents itself with its affirmative functions. We do have alternatives: at least **reformistic** or **problemizing** functions, in principle even **revolutionary** functions - although I suppose that in practice the latter is too demanding.

I could also use examples to describe and analyse both administrative and critical research and training in public opinion, and not only in mass communication, even though the latter is closer to me than the former.

The measurement of public opinion is not an easy task, at least if we propose to do that adequately. My professor of sociology Erik **Allardt** liked to use the following example in his lessons: In Finland there we had a Prohibition Act until 1933; it was abolished with a referendum which in principle is comparable to opinion polls. What Allardt said was that you must not think that the ideas of all Finnish people voting against the Act were similar. Some of them were serious supporters of temperance, some of them were smugglers making money by importing alcohol from Estonia.

Taking this into consideration is not tantamount to being critical; critical, to me, means much more than just that. Here, I refer to the textbook "Tiedotusoppi" (1978) (Communication theory) by my colleague Kaarle **Nordenstreng**, in which he among other things analyses the concept of "gallup democracy". According to Nordenstreng, opinion polls can in capitalism be used for **manipulative** purposes in two ways: they may be technically incorrect or correct. Even polls which follow all the basic rules may be misleading: for example, they may require people to take a stand on problems in which they are not properly informed.

Personally I understand very well that you need opinion polls in the Soviet Union, especially in these times of perestroika and glasnost. However, I also think it is important to emphasize that you must be critical and extremely careful in using opinion polls.

Finally, I would like to conclude by a remark which I take from an article written by a younger colleague of mine. He noted that there is a certain difference between administrative and critical research and training - which also means that these two orientations can be placed on two separate levels. Critical research can use the ideas and results of administrative research, but hardly vice versa.

V.S. Korobeinikov

THE PRESS, PUBLIC OPINION, AND THE PROCESS OF RESTRUCTURING

The January 1987 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee stressed in its resolution that one of the main conditions for the acceleration of economic and social development in our country is the all-round development of socialist democracy, the reconstruction of Soviet society.[1] A major role in this process is played by the relationship between the mass media and public opinion.

Traditionally, this dialectical relationship is regarded as a two-way road: on the one hand, the mass media are channels for the expression and formation of public opinion, and on the other hand public opinion directly affects the activities of the press, radio and TV, and can thus can be regarded as one of the main criteria of their efficiency.

On the whole the relationship of the press and public opinion is characterized by a high degree of mutual interdependence and interaction, that degree depending on the development of these two elements and the general social and political atmosphere prevailing in the society concerned.

Here we shall pay special attention to the latter: the documents of the XXVII CPSU Congress point out that greater openness is a fundamental precondition for the whole process of democratization.

The 1987 January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee also emphasized this factor. The resolution adopted by the Plenum obliged all party committees and organizations to take additional steps towards greater openness, to encourage criticism and self-criticism, especially criticism from below.[2] A more active application of the principle of openness raises the question: "What does glasnost mean, what aspects and elements are involved?"

Basically, glasnost means having ready access to various facts of life and an open, public discussion of these questions. Openness is thus a complex process which involves a number of heterogeneous elements and which consists of different stages. In

our opinion the problem of accessibility involves a combination of subjective and objective factors. An example of the former is the cultural and educational level of population. The latter, then, includes the means that ensure accessibility and the spheres of life covered by accessibility. Again, the XXVII CPSU Congress gave special emphasis to the importance of broadening spheres of accessibility, stating that there should be no areas closed to criticism in Soviet society. As Mikhail Gorbachev stressed at the January Plenum, this holds true especially with regard to the mass media.[3]

The process of openness is not related to individual or small group information, but above all to public information, i.e. to informing the majority of the people of a given social and territorial community.

Openness also implies broad circulation and discussion of messages. It is oriented only towards particular forms of information circulation which are usually formalized by character. This is why we find an absence of openness in, say, work collectives where information is exchanged in small groups, in smoking rooms, lobbies, etc. On the other hand, even formalized ways of spreading information (e.g. at meetings) does not automatically promote the process of openness; there must also be an open and frank discussion of topical problems. In other words, the key to openness lies not only in the way in which information is spread, but also in the content of that information. The more important and urgent the social problem, the greater openness is required. Finally, openness which is both critical and constructive presupposes an exchange of opinions, a consideration of all possible approaches to resolving a certain problem.

Greater openness will have a profound effect on the relationship of the mass media and public opinion.

First, the principle of orienting the press, radio and TV to their audiences is being strengthened. Consequently, the mass media involve broader masses and groups of people who represent the subject of public opinion. The January Plenum pointed out that Soviet people are giving due credit to the central role of

the press in the party's restructuring campaign. The number of subscribers to central newspapers and magazines increased by 14 million in 1986, the growth being highest in newspapers, which are to respond to the information demands of their readers. To illustrate this, we shall take the newspaper "Sovetskaya Rossia" whose publications are based, primarily, on readers' mail and public opinion polls. In 1986 its circulation grew as much as in the previous decade, and now it is over 4.5 million. It is natural that its effect on the people producing public opinion has grown as well.

Making mass media part of the process of greater openness will oblige them objectively to get rid of political pompousness, general phrases, and makes it impossible "to varnish" different aspects of life. It is known that "communication reality" differs from actual reality. The range of difference may vary significantly. In the course of restructuring the conditions for approximating "communication" image of man's environment and reality are being built up. As M.S. Gorbatchev stressed at the meeting with mass media heads, "it is necessary that newspapers, radio an TV should reflect life itself, the working people should speak in their own language about new things that are becoming part of our reality, about their problems and ideas."[4]

Live programmes are another means of a more accurate reflection of reality by radio and TV. They include not only different kinds of "round tables" and reporting but complex programmes as well, such as "Youth Channel" made up by the general editorial board of the USSR State TV and Broadcasting Committee for young people which first appeared in late January, 1987.

Our press is taking various steps to orient journalists to a more accurate reflection of reality. Take, for example, All-Union short meetings of journalists. In January, 1987, such a short meeting of journalists working in agricultural press took place. It pointed out that their publications were not always related to actual life and recommendations were made to improve the situation.

As we can see, the restructuring process requires a more accurate reflection of the most burning problems of reality, i.e. of public opinion object, through mass media publications.

This requirement holds true at a regional and local levels. The central mass media have become more active than local ones in the campaign for restructuring. Addressing the June Plenum (1986) M.S. Gorbatchev said, "I'd like to draw your attention to the fact that the degree of openness and efficiency of numerous local papers is much less than that of the centrl press. According to the analysis it is linked directly with the position of local party committees. Therefore, it is important to make adequate self-critical conclusions both for party committees and editorial boards.[5]

Numerous facts prove that those who are against restructuring and openness at a local level are taking a very aggressive attitude towards the press trying to reflect reality in all its aspects. Thus, e.g., law enforcement agencies in the Voroshilovgrad region made an unlawful arrest of Berkhin V.B., a correspondent of "Sovetsky shahter". The USSR Procurator's Office conducted an investigation and found out that the correspondent had been prosecuted for exposing certain shortcomings in the activities of the law enforcement agencies.[6] Another example was cited at the Congress of Tchuvashia Union of Journalists held in late November in the town of Tcheboksary. The local youth paper published an article on white-collar crimes and bureaucratic methods of the Tcheboksary technical stock bureau. Though the facts presented in the article were indisputable those under criticism filed a complaint against the newspaper. And only when another critical publication appeared in a republican party newspaper the court admitted the criticism.

Besides regional and local there is also a narrow departmental level of reflecting reality. It is known that in early 1986 the CPSU Central Committee discussed the facts of rough administration and suppression of criticism in regard to the editorial boards of "Vozdushny transport" and "Vodny transport". Instead of supporting critical and well-grounded

publications the administration of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Marine, the Ministry of River Navigation and the central committee of marine and river transport workers trade union launched a campaign against the editors and journalists who published critical articles. The CPSU Central Committee assessed these facts in a principal way.

All this is an example of those difficulties that the press has to overcome in achieving a new level of openness and accuracy which are needed in the restructuring process. But in its striving for tackling new and complex tasks, for probing into life the press is getting strong public support. We have no sociological data in this respect yet. However, the analysis of readers' letters to numerous newspapers and magazines testifies to it.

Thus, in the course of restructuring the press not only informs the public and gives an impulse to expression and formation of public opinion but it is also supported by public opinion in its struggle against conservatism, against obvious and covert opponents of reforms in Soviet society.

The principle of openness which is the basis of restructuring implies not only informing people of certain problems (information stage) but their obligatory discussion as well with the ultimate aim to work out a variant or variants of evaluation and solution of problems under consideration. Genuine openness is always constructive by nature.

Restructuring makes it necessary for mass media to compare positions, points of views, pro and contra. An increased amount of debates in Soviet press, radio broadcasts and TV programmes is really striking. And it stands to reason that the process of public opinion formation cannot do without exchange of views.

A more problematic style in highlighting problems is welcomed by a majority of people and this was empirically deduced as far back as in early 70's in the study conducted by "Literaturnaya Gazetta". About 70 % of interviewed stated that they prefer to know all existing, or at least, two opposite views in discussing certain problems.

Readers spoke inequivocally not only for polemic presentation

of problems but also for logical, or preferably, practical follow-up results of such discussions.

This demand is becoming more urgent in the restructuring process which calls for achieving final results and not for empty debates. But in fact, even now mass media happen to start a polemics by publishing one or two articles on a problem and then to curb the discussion leaving it as it is without any practical results. Greater openness gives new prospects for further efficiency of mass media, for strengthening their organizational functions. Speaking after the January Plenum (1987) at the meeting with mass media heads Gorbatchev M.S. said that, "The press with its potential, with its susceptibility to everything new and progressive, the press possessing such mighty levers as criticism, openness, propaganda of advanced experience can and must do many things. Propaganda of live experience of work in the process of restructuring is of utmost importance now."

Supporting the restructuring process the press, in its turn, is given strong impulses for functioning under new conditions. It is in the process of such an interaction that its role as a channel for expression and formation of public opinion is growing.

Notes

1. Documents of the CPSU CC Plenum. January, 27-28, 1987. M., p. 11.
2. ibid., p. 5.
3. ibid., p. 5.
4. "Communist", 1986, No 6, p. 3.
5. Pravda, February, 14, 1987

Kauko Pietilä

TWO VERSIONS OF WHAT PUBLIC OPINION MEANS

The first version

My basic text will be the following passage from **The German** Ideology by Marx and Engels (orig. 1845-46):

> "Die Gedanken der herrschenden Klasse sind in jeder Epoche die herrschenden Gedanken, d.h. die Klasse, welche die Herrschende **materielle** Macht der Gesellschaft ist, ist zugleich ihre herrschende **geistige** Macht. Die Klasse, die die Mittel zur materiellen Produktion zu ihrer Verfügung hat, disponiert damit zugleich über die mittel zur geistigen Produktion, so dass ihr damit zugleich im Durchschnitt die Gedanken derer, denen die Mittel zur geistigen Produktion abgehen, unterworfen sind. Die herrschenden Gedanken sind weiter Nichts als der ideelle Ausdruck der herrschenden materiellen Verhältnisse, die als Gedanken gefassten herrschenden materiellen Verhältnisse; also der Verhältnisse, die eben die eine Klasse zur herrschenden machen, also die Gedanken ihrer Herrschaft. Die Individuen, welche die herrschende Klasse ausmachen, haben unter Anderm auch Bewusstsein und denken daher; insofern sie also als Klasse herrschen und den ganzen Umfang einer Geschichtsepoche bestimmen, versteht es sich von selbst, dass sie dies in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung tun, also unter Andern auch als Denkende, als Produzenten von Gedanken herrschen, die Produktion und Distribution der Gedanken ihrer Zeit regeln; dass also ihre Gedanken die herrschenden Gedanken der Epoche sind." (MEW 3, 46.)[1]

My question is now: What kind of a problematic is presented in the passage quoted above? - More particularly: What does it mean that a class is the ruling "intellectual force" (as it has been translated, see Marx & Engels 1976, 67) of a society? What does it mean that a class' ideas are the ruling ideas of an age? What does it mean that the ideas of subordinate groups are dominated by the ideas of superordinate groups? What does it mean that the

ruling ideas are but the ideal expression of the dominant material relations? Etc.

The above passage from **The German Ideology** was one of the theoretical cornerstones in an article by two British scholars, Murdock and Golding (1977), about capitalism, communication and class relations. The writers interpret Marx's and Engels' ideas in the following manner (p. 15):

The passage from **The German Ideology** puts forward three important propositions: (1) "that control over 'the production and distribution of ideas' is concentrated in the hands of the capitalist owners of the means of production", (2) "that as a result of this control their views and accounts of the world receive insistent publicity and come to dominate the thinking of subordinate groups", and (3) "that this ideological domination plays a key role in maintaining class inequalitites". Murdock and Golding further say that each of the above points in turn rises important questions of empirical investigation in the field of mass communication research.

One set of empirical research questions is about the relations between communications entrepreneurs and the capitalist class and between ownership and control within the communications industries. - Another set of questions is about the process through which the dominant ideology is translated into cultural commodities to be sold and purchased in the market place. - And a third set of questions is about the dynamics of reception and the extent to which members of subordinate groups adopt the dominant ideas as thir own.

What then is, according to Murdock's and Golding's interpretation, the central problematic in the passage quoted above from **The German Ideology**? Murdock and Golding study mass communication, and their perspective into mass communications is to study the complex in terms of "production and distribution of social knowledge" (p. 15). This is their horizon for the interpretation of **The German Ideology** and for the attribution of social rationality to the process of mass communication:

Basically, mass communication is production and distribution

of social knowledge. Social knowledge is equal to "views and accounts of the world", or to thinking. In a class-society (as in capitalism), the views and accounts, or the thinking, of the ruling class "come to dominate the thinking of subordinate groups" - which simply means that the ruling class rules over the minds of the individuals in the subordinate classes, as aspect of the overall dominant position of the ruling class in society.

The problematic, then, of our **German Ideology** passage would be about the control and domination of the subordinate groups' consciousness by the ruling groups through the mechanism of producing and distributing social knowledge. - The 'social knowledge' interpretation of **the German Ideology** is a theory of society. It says something about the way the ruling class and the subordinate classes are held together and make a unity, a whole society, which functions in unison in spite of the fundamental antagonisms between the classes. The ruling classes are able to tune the whole social system through the mechanism of the production and distribution of social knowledge. This mechanism makes the subordinate groups to think the ideas of the superordinate groups and to act accordingly. - This is governing the society through ideas and through thinking, through the minds of the people. Unisonous thinking about the world leads to harmonious overall social activity in the ruling class's interest, and the social explosiveness in the subordination of one class by another is domesticated and held under control. We have here the idea that the rulers are directing other people's activities the way military men are steering their long-distance missiles through remote control devices from their thick-walled hidden bunkers.

What is the matter?

As the 'social knowledge' perspective is the first of two different approaches to the concept of public opinion in this paper, there must be, of course, something wrong with this conception, something wrong that justifies a second, corrective approach. - What, then, is the matter with the 'social knowledge'

perspective, quite a commonly held view in the communications research? (e.g. Boyd-Barrett & Braham 1987)

Let us begin by taking notice of the fact that Marx and Engels do not say (as Murdock and Golding say) that the ruling group's views and accounts of the world "come to dominate the thinking of subordinate groups" and "that this ideological domination plays a key role in maintaining class inequalities". - What Marx and Engels say is that the individuals of the ruling class also rule as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age. This is not, not at least directly, the same as dominating subordinate people's thinking and stabilizing an antagonistic society through this kind of a domination of ideologies.

We may agree with Murdock's and Golding's interpretation of **The German Ideology** when they write "that control over 'the production and distribution of ideas' is concentrated in the hands of the capitalist owners of the means of production" and "that as a result of this control their views and accounts of the world receive insistent publicity"; this is what Marx and Engels really say. But clearly to say this is not enough to account for the ruling group's domination over the subordinate groups. We must ask further: In what sense does the control over the production and distribution of ideas and the domination over publicity even constitute the intellectual leadership, or hegemony (cf. Jessop 1983, 98-109), of the (materially) ruling group over the (materially) subordinate groups? One possibility is to think, as Murdock and Golding do, that the ruling groups not only control production and distribution of ideas and not only dominate publicity, but even control and dominate the thinking and action of the subordinate groups and in this way make them do things in the interest of the ruling groups. If we reject this possibility (because it is not in any clear way indicated by Marx and Engels), what alternatives remain?

The second version

Marx and Engels say that some ideas are dominant and some others

are subdued (unterworfen sind) by them. Where can this struggle of ideas take place if not in the minds of the people? It seems that the domination and subduing must take place in the very production and distribution of ideas and not somewhere beyond. What does this mean? In what sense does the production and distribution of ideas constitute the intellectual leadership, or hegemony, for the producers and distributors of ideas if not by way of those ideas directing the thinking and activity of the members of the groups the producers intend to lead? The answer is now becoming obvious: The production and distribution of ideas accords and intellectual leadership to the producers/distributors in so far as this group (or person) is able to produce and distribute ideas in society, that is, simply to speak on behalf of other people. A group (or a person) has an intellectual leadership, if its production and distribution of ideas - its discourse - has a collectively organizing power: if its discourse results in the formation of a collectivity which is headed (or given a public voice) by the group or person in question.

This is the answer to the question: What does it mean that a class' ideas are the ruling ideas of an age? It means that those ideas are the ruling ideas in the publicity of an age; they are able to collect the largest or most important share of the population around themselves, around the media presenting those ideas or discourses.

This is what I think Marx and Engels meant when writing: "insofern sie also als Klasse herrschen und den ganzen Umfang einer Geschichtsepoche bestimmen, versteht es sich von selbst, dass sie dies in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung tun, also unter Andern auch als Denkende, als Produzenten von Gedanken herrschen, die Produktion und Distribution der Gedanken ihrer Zeit regeln".

There is the qualification "in so far as they rule as a class". No group or no class rules "in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung", if it does not have the ideas or the means of distributing them so that a following - an audience, a public in the least - would be created. But if it has the ideas and the means of interpellating or addressing people (cf. Althusser 1971, 127-186), and if the people do not want any other speaker or if

thy have recourse to no organs or bodies of better representation, then the group will have the people's intellectual leadership no matter what the interpellated themselves think. The producers/distributors of ideas are in that case the public thinkers and speakers of the people they are able to represent, that is, to gather as their following by virtue of their intellectual activity, by virtue of their use of the means of mental production - simply, by virtue of their ability to speak (or otherwise to express themselves) publicly.

Policy implications

We have two interpretations of the passage from **The German Ideology** quoted on page one above. My point in this paper is not to say that the first interpretation is the wrong or erroneous and the second the right or correct way of thinking about the processes of producing and distributing ideas in society. Neither is it my point that the first perspective is an erroneous and the second a correct interpretation of what Marx and Engels actually meant to say. - My aim is to argue that the two different perspectives have differing **practical** implications in relation to mass communication.

So, we have the two different interpretations. We might say that we have two different models of what mass communication basically is. - The first model begins with a **societal** problematic, with the fact that publicity is dominated by the owners of the means of (material) production; with the fact that publicity is structured according to the class relations in material production. The model then proceeds to spell out the implications of this domination and structuration, and in this proceeding it moves over to an **individualistic problematic:** in the end it is concerned with the ways people or the individual members of the public **think** about the world.

The second model reconstructs the very same phenomena in a diametrically opposite way. It begins with an individualistic problematic, or with the fact that the members of the (materially) ruling group even think, produce ideas, have views

and accounts of the world. They distribute the ideas they have produced, and this distribution equals to their interpellating or addressing the people: to their ability to gather followings and to constitute collective actors (movements, groupings, clubs, fractions, parties etc. - or simply audiences, readerships etc.) around their discourses, around their organs or media of communication, which hold together these social formations as their collective organizers. Remember what Lenin said and emphasized when talking about the press: "Newspaper is not merely a collective propagandist or a collective agitator, but also a collective organizer" (1976, 513; orig. 1901). - In this reconstruction the second model moves from an individualistic problematic over to a societal problematic: from individuals' thinking to the formations of collectivities constituting the arena of publicity - which is the arena of civil society.

In terms of **public opinion** we may depict the first model as a crude schema:

(1) public opinions → public's opinions.

A corresponding schema for the second model might look as follows:

(2) public opinions & publics → collective actors in publicity.

But what are the practical implications of the two models (of mass communication, public opinion and related things)?

The first case. - Here, our basic concern is about the ways people think of e.g. social affairs. What are the perspectives of practical activity in that case? What is the essence of **media** criticism in that case? What can we **do** about the matter? Our theory says that people's ways of thinking (and after that: of acting) depend to a degree upon what views and accounts of the world mass-mediated messages contain. Clearly we have at least two alternative options for practical action:

(1) It is possible, at least in principle, to alter the - supposedly - harmful contents of mass communication. Or:

(2) It is possible, again in principle, to immunize people against the harmful effects of mass communication (or to

sensitize people's receptivity to favourable contents) through, e.g., media education.

The second alternative has often been presented in semiotically inspired media research (see e.g. Hartley 1982). This kind of critical thinking aims at severing the social bond of domination between senders and recipients of mass communication. The difficulty with this approach is that it loses all perspectives into socialization (Vergesellschaftung). It does not know Vergesellschaftung. Socialization becomes a personal affair; you are furnished in education, media education in our case, with intellectual tools to cope with processes of communication - it is up to you to use the tools.

The first alternative, on the other hand, is often present in studies seeking biases in the content of mass communication. An excellent example is the comprehensive study of television news by the Glasgow University Media Group (1976 and 1980). Biases were found by the GUMG, of course; in industrial news (the Group's attention was centered on them) the labour standpoint was systematically misrepresented, thwarted, made seem irrational etc. as compared to the representation of the employers' or the government's standpoint, which were taken as the natural views in industrial affairs. What was the practical implication? Naturally: news bulletins must not favour any one point of view but must be objective (in any sense of the word), unpartisan, neutral, balanced etc. (see the conclusion in GUMG 1980, 398-418).

The difficult point with this approach is that, in a peculiar way, its original anti-ideological intention is frustrated and transformed in its direct opposite. I shall describe this with W.F. Haug's words (1983, 15-16; see also Nemitz 1983, 98-103). Haug's thesis is that "a fundamental form of social struggles in the context of the establishment of class differentiation can be understood as **the antagonistic reclamation of community** (or 'Gemeinwesen', as Marx used to say)". My suggestion is that mass communication research, which has the demand of objectivity, unpartisanship, neutrality etc. as its practical conclusion, is a contribution to such a "fundamental form of social struggles".

Haug describes the outcome of these struggles as follows:

> "A new, stable power structure with the social axis of class antagonism can only develop if, laterally to this class structure, ideological powers are erected. In other words, the disintegration of community stabilizes itself through the ideological restitution of community" (15-16).

What are these ideological powers? They are composed of two sets of elements. On the one hand, there are the values, and this is how we get the realm of ideological values:

> "In the symbolic form the antagonists are consensus. The symbolic form is that which is 'identical' in the antagonistic articulations. The concrete meanings, however, diverge immediately. This detaches the symbolic forms, renders them autonomous, sanctifies them. The weaker part of the antagonists will clasp onto them, the dominating will use them. An increasing amount of the struggling energies will flow into these forms. For the oppressed, these forms can mean the - perhaps last - relation to ancient hereditary rights, a symbolic communitarian property. Precisely through their groupings for the old communitarian rights in the symbolic forms, sanctified by tradition, do the oppressed effect further detachment of these forms. From an antagonistic reclamation of communitarian elements the whole process shifts to the antagonistic reclamation of transcendent powers or, as Engels liked to say, celestialized (verhimmelte) powers" (16).

Objectivity, impartiality, neutrality etc. in news transmission are, I assume, "old communitarian rights in the symbolic form, sanctified by tradition", of communication, now transformed in transcendent, celestialized (verhimmelte) powers, or ideological values. Communications research of the GBN type is a contribution to this transformation and celestialization. - The realm of values is one set of elements in the composition of ideological powers; the other set consists of the ideological apparatuses that claim to serve the "other-worldly powers" or the ideological values. Haug's examples are church vs. God/heaven and law vs. justice (p. 19); I suggest now continuing the list

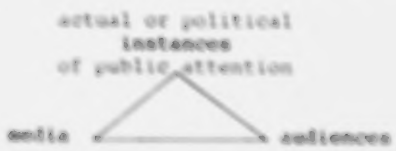
with the couple mass media vs. objectivity/neutrality/balance/etc.

We see, then, that both of the practical alternatives offered by our first model of mass communication (mass communication as a means of influencing people's thinking, and via thinking, action) are unsatisfactory. One alternative loses all sight of socialisation (Vergesellschaftung); the other one contributes to ideological socialisation. For these practical reasons have I presented my proposal for the adoption of the second interpretation of **The German Ideology** and the corresponding perspective onto mass communications.

The second case. - In my view, mass communication is not primarily a means of influencing the audience's view of the world, but it is inviting people to participate in the collectivity, which is constituted by the action of the mass medium in question (and this action is interpellating or addressing an audience and speaking of the world in a definite way). What is the practical conclusion in that case? Not media education in order to maximise the user's potentials of utilising mass media for his/her own purposes. Neither the demands for objectivity.

We do not locate the social problematic of mass communication in the utility of the medium for its utilizer. But we do not locate it in the epistemic relation between an external reality and its reflection in the medium's messages. But we locate the social problematic of mass communication in the relation between the community constituted by the medium (consisting of the medium as its audience) on the one hand, and all the social agents (individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, etc. - also states of affairs) who do not belong to that community. The latter are, of course, the ones that are, or could be, talked about in the medium's discourse; and the relation is, naturally, a relation of power. In this perspective, mass communication (or, at least, journalism) is a mediation between the public and the instances which do not belong to the public but are the differentiated bearers of all the various specific functions of society.

We have here a tripartite system, depictable in this way:



In this triangle, the medium and its audience compose always the **primary community**, which has the third parties, the vast diversity of social agents and actors (and states of affairs) as the subject matter of its discussions (discussion in the peculiar sense of mass communication). Instances can be very numerous. According to a count (see K. Pietilä 1980, 349), there were 4566 different agents in one edition (April 6, 1979) of the leading daily newspaper in Finland, **Helsingin Sanomat**. The practical task of the media (of journalists, for example) is - in our sociological perspective - not to produce and distribute objective social knowledge about an external objective reality to members of audiences, so as to influence their thinking and to regulate their action, but to construct a social (or better: societal) reality out of the elements of the triangle above.

They do this by addressing the public and by speaking about the third parties (& states of affairs) in a particular way. This is their intellectual leadership of the community, which, in the case of **Helsingin Sanomat** for instance, consists of the newspaper plus a permanent audience of about 1,1 million daily readers. This community exists in society, has definite relations to other parts of society, and exerts its influence in society, through the action of the newspaper. Every significant other actor of society - and many of the significant, too - must take into account the **HS** community. One cannot do important things in society without attracting the attention of that community.

To approach the practical aspects of this idea, let us now take Marx's 11th thesis on Feuerbach, substituting the word 'journalists' for 'philosophers': "The journalists have only

interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to **change** it" (Marx & Engels 1976, 617). How can they do this? It is worth taking notice that Marx does not say that the task of changing the world belongs to the **disciplines** of philosophers or to their audiences or followers; neither can we burden the audiences of the mass media with this responsibility. The task is the media's responsibility. How can they do this? How can they change the world? - They could not do it, if they did not have share in its present constitution. But this is exactly what they have: they contribute to the establishment of an organized society in their discourse through putting their own community into definite relations with other instances of society, and also through relating other instances of society to each other in a definite way. And this is certainly something they can change if deemed necessary or desirable, in principle if not in practice (changing the world is never any easy task). This is the proper field of 'ideological class struggle' in mass communication: the struggle over articulations of society in the discourse of mass communication - the struggle over the structure of pulicity (which is a part of the stucture of civil society).

But what is the practical conclusion? We do not suggest media education (neither do we object to it); and we do not suggest objectivity (neither object to it).

My first suggestion is that we ought to develop an awareness of the societal constitutiveness of media practices (cf. Marx's 8th thesis on Feuerbach: "All social life is essentially practial"). What kind of societies do the practices produce? How is society organized or articulated in journalism? What are the relations of power between different agents in the society produced in journalism? When I say that we ought to develop such an awareness, I include in that 'we' both us the media researchers and then the media producers.

But could we say a bit more about the praxis of, e.g., journalism? Clearly we are looking for practical guidelines of journalistic work. What could be the ethical principles of that work? Responsibility to ideological values such as objectivity? This alternative we have rejected (which is not to say that we

are propagating unobjective, subjective or discretionary journalism). - To what or to whom can we say the media producers ought to be responsible? We look at journalism as an activity constituting society in the sense of connecting or interrelating people, groups, organizations etc. to one another - as a field of interaction. What could be the general standard for the journalist's activity in setting up this field of interaction, in connecting publics to specific instances, and specific instances to each other? The journalist's responsibility lies, naturally, with the community of his/her own convocation. In relating to the world 'outside' in his/her news stores, the journalist is not alone, but is relating his/her whole audience to the wider world of news events. In laying hands on the third parties of our triangle on page 9, it is the journalist's foremost responsibility to do it the interest of the medium's silent or speechless partner in the primary community, the public. What remains to be clarified is the public's interest. But that is another story.

Notes

1. Translation of the passage quoted on page one: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling **material** force of society is at the same time its ruling **intellectual** force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one viduals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as

thinkers, a producers of ideas, and equate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch." (Marx & Engels 1976, 67).

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G. Sillaste

THE ROLE OF MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA IN FORMING PUBLIC OPINION AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF LIFE IN THE WORKERS' COLLECTIVES

1. "Democratism - is not only the slogan but the essence of reconstruction" - this was stressed during the January (1987) Plenum of the CC of the CPSU.The reconstruction of life in the workers' collectives takes place in an atmosphere of a mass renovation and further democratization of Soviet society, broadening of publicity, activation of discussion, criticism and self-criticism, development and self-government. A new ideological situation with a salutary effect on public opinion in the workers' collectives is being created in society.

2. The salutary influence of publicity upon public opinion shows in the following points. First, owing to it the population is now better informed and the public opinion has a more solid basis of factual information. A decisive role in the process is played by mass media. The scope of public opinion has also been extended to cover many events, phenomena and facts in many spheres of life in Soviet society which have traditionally been secluded from public discussion - the so-called "zones out of criticism". As a result the informative function of public opinion is enhanced, the creation of public opinion becomes more dynamic, the intensitivity and polarisation of opinions increases, and the level of competence rises among the public. The regulative and educational function of the public opinion is also accentuated and it provides coordination of public and group interests in the struggle against drawbacks in the workers' collectives. Third, the new situation increases the interest of administrative organs to study, mould and predict public opinion and take it account while passing new laws and stipulations. The new approach thus contributes to developing a function for public opinion which has hitherto been largely hampered, namely the function of social control.

3. One of the special features of the formation of public opinion in the socialist workers' collectives is a well-branched

network of informative sources with a rather intricate differential effect on the communicative behaviour of the audience, in this case, on the workers' collective. The influence of various channels of information is differentiated according to demographic, national-psychological, professional and educational features of the workers. In a sociological study of public opinion in workers' collectives the channels of information falls into two groups: external and internal. The external group includes the main mass media - Union and republican TV, radio, and press. For example, the audience rates of Union mass media channels are: Central TV - 69%, radio - 49%; of republican channels - Central TV 77%, Estonian radio - 75%. One of the peculiarities of the republic is intensive and virtually hundred per cent address of the population to urban and regional newspapers.

The audiences of the main mass media differ by language and by territorial zones with access to programmes from foreign TV stations.

According to the data on the public opinion of the Estonian population obtained in an enquiry by the Informative-Calculative Centre of State-TV-Radio of Estonia in 1985 (Director: A.Saar), 40.9% of the non-Estonian population can watch programmes of Estonian TV and listen to radio; 82.4% of Estonians can receive programmes from CTV and all-Union radio.

91.5% of Estonians prefer publications only in Estonian. Among non-Estonians, 79.5% read newspapers only in Russian. Among Estonians 40% of the respondents speak Finnish (some of them perfectly); among non-Estonians the share is 8.4%. Clear reception of foreign TV is possible in a third part of the territory. The main responsibility for informing the collective[2] about problems in its inner life and for providing publicity for decisions on production and social questions lies with the urban newspapers (this was marked by 40% of the respondents). The republican newspapers came second (almost every third respondent learned about the problems of the collective "only from this" or "mainly from this source"), while the republican radio and TV play a minor role (upto 40%

"sometimes" get information about the problems of the collective from these sources).

Nevertheless, internal production information is the main medium that provides publicity in the workers' collective, helps create a competent public opinion on the questions concerning economy, production and society. For this purpose there are internal information channels (upto 16 in one collective) that are either mass communication channels (multi-circulation newspapers, notice and information boards, wall press, radio) or interpersonal channels (lecture propaganda, speeches of leaders before the collective, political days, political information, political and economic education, contacts with collaborators, and meetings of different public organizations). The publicity of all levels of administration, from party-politics to the state and to workers' collectives, is a perfect example of the applicability of mass media in involving the working people in the decision-making at the levels of enterprises, units and whole society.

Besides the developing publicity of the outer mass media another important source of information is the communication and contacts between persons in the collective. A correlative analysis shows that the main constituents of publicity and public opinion are, among external sources, republican TV and urban newspaper, among inner sources ceremonial and trade-union meetings of the collective, unit republican day, and ideological planning meetings. The highest rating in the collective is given to multi-circulation newspapers. Still other media with vast but hitherto largely unexploited potentials are the wall-press and radio.

During the past few years there has seemed to be a stable tendency towards a rise in the importance of interpersonal channels of communication (conversations between collaborators, speeches of enterprise management on political and economic questions) in the formation of public opinion in the workers' collective. Every second respondent reported getting information about the inner life in the collective "most often" or "just from this source". One special feature in the formation of public

opinion in the workers' collective is the total publicity given to decision-making on questions concerning its inner life (productive, social or ideological), the truthfulness of interproductive information including information about negative aspects. The results of the enquiry show that in the struggle against negative aspects outer sources are appreciated higher than inner sources.

The development of publicity also increases the number of issues subject to vivid discussion and special interest in the collective. Most of them are unsolved questions of the inner life in the collective, issues related to the spreading of the principle of social justice above all in the distribution of material values, the problem of the low appreciation of moral stimulation. As a result of this trend the scope of public opinion broadens. The reliability of widespread opinions depends on the quality of information available, how complete and objective it is and how well it covers the general concerns of the collective. However, evaluations of the quality of information in this field are not actually simple. A high rating ("information is full and truthful") is given to information about the abuse of alcohol, infringement of traffic rules and labour discipline, neglect of planned duties.

The lower the level of publicity on negative aspects in the collective, on concrete culprits, the weaker the educational influence of public opinion on people's behaviour, on their personal contribution to the elimination of such drawbacks. In the opinion of every second member of the collective there is not enough criticism and there are still "zones out of criticism" and suppression of criticism; one sixth have the opinion that the general atmosphere still does not provide for the development of criticism and self-criticism. Most critique (by every second member) is levelled at information concerning infringements of the principle of social justice in the distribution of material values, the low appreciation of moral stimulation, speculation in gasoline, acquisition of income by other means than work. Every fourth expressed a dissatisfaction in the quality of information about plundering of socialist property, use of state transport

for personal purposes. ("Information is full but far from complete). There seems to be a considerable need to develop the efficiency of the inner sources of information in exposing these questions.

5. The development of publicity and competence of public opinion gives public opinion increasing functions of social control. These functions show in the evaluations of the activity of comrade courts and other groups assigned with the task of controlling people, and in listening to reports of leaders of elective organs and administration.

In informing the working people these organs and people should give full coverage to decisions taken and to drawbacks discovered in the collective.

For a long time this side of the activity of public organizations has in fact been out of people's control. The reason lies in the earlier low level of publicity in the activity of these organs. The most critical assessments in the level of publicity were given to the activity of the trade committee, particularly as regards vital questions discussed in its meetings which are also objects of public opinion in the collective: distribution of social goods, improvement of conditions of work, leisure and mode of life. The lack of sincere information gives birth to rumours, distorted data, reduces confidence in the activity of the trade-union organization and its leaders. In the enterprise "Autotrans" a negative public opinion was taken into account and a new chairman was elected for the trade-union committee.

A high number of positive assessments marked the opinion of the respondents about the level of publicity in the activity of party committee and party organizations of the enterprise: 88% were satisfied with it. An analysis of the relation between the level of publicity in the action of a public organization and a general evaluation of publicity in the decision-making on productive, social, and ideological problems of the community shows that the decisive element affecting people's opinions is information about the activity of the party committee. The increasing publicity of its activity has a salutary effect on the

development of publicity in the activity of other elective organs. Moreover, the higher the appreciation of the publicity in the activity of the party committee, the greater unanimosity in the collective while electing the leader.

By contrast, the respondents are not satisfied with the publicity in the activity of comrade courts and other groups of social control. Nine tenth of the 50% of respondents who gave their opinion about publicity in the activity of groups of public control said that they got information about the results of check-ups, discovered drawbacks in production and their culprits mainly from meetings, seldom from wall newspapers. In modern conditions the social control function of public opinion obviously has a great potential for promoting the development of productive collectives, for activating the members in the struggle against infringements of the norms of productive life.

The mass media are also useful in this struggle because they serve as channels for expressing critically-transforming public opinion. The effectiveness of these channels in forming a critical collective opinion is manifested not only in their influence on people's behaviour but also in their educative effects on people's consciousness in advocating the principles of collective, humanistic, active morality.

What is still more important is that among the negative aspects the analysis discovers the following to be dominant: unscrupulousness, consumption, psychology, limitation of criticism. So the true reasons for stagnation in workers' collectives are the low level of consciousness of some people, a "braking mechanism" formed in the 1970s, an underestimation of moral factors in solving problems concerning the satisfaction of the developing material needs of the Soviet people, not a crisis of the socialist systems, as it is asserted by our class opponents.

6. An important factor that modifies the influence of public opinion on people's actions is political culture. Its effect is indicated in people's readiness to take concrete actions to solve urgent problems, to overcome drawbacks in the everyday life of the collective; to join efforts in the pursuit of significant

collective objectives. According to the data obtained in the enquiry three levels of activity can be distinguished in the workers' behaviour: real, potential, and lacking potential (an indifferent attitude). The percentages of the groups are 20-24%, 26%, 22-28%, respectively. In the light of the respondents' evaluations the level of real activity is highest in the struggle against breaches of labour discipline: nearly 70% participate in the public reproach of the offenders. The real activity to stop breaches in the field of technology, such as distributing spoiled production, is slightly lower: every second participates in the public reproach. The next lower level belongs to the activity against the abuse of service status, for example, using state transportation for personal purposes (40-44% take part in the reproach). Still lesser real activity is related to the questions of participation in the public-cultural life of an enterprise. The lowest activity is recorded for the struggle against limitations of criticism: only one third of the respondents are active in this struggle.

7. The ways and methods to mobilize the public opinion of a collective in the struggle against drawbacks fall into two groups: external and internal. Internal: speeches at workers' meetings, addresses to the leaders, public organs, offering of personal material or other aid, spending ones own time for these purposes. External: declarations to local administrative organs (urban, district), letters to TV, radio and newspapers, declarations to the central republican and all-union organs.

In practice the active group tends to prefer the internal channels. Nearly one half of the respondents made speeches at the workers' meetings, every fourth addressed the leaders of enterprises and gave personal aid. Among external possibilities rather common were addresses to local administrative organs (every tenth); less common were addresses to all-union organs. So it seems that the real activity of individuals in the struggle against negative aspects of the life in workers' collectives is directed primarily to the internal channels of influence. In this light it is evident that increasing the responsibility of elected and adminstrative leaders of enterprises for deciding urgent

questions and providing publicity for the decisions are reliable means of creating a favourable public opinion with regard to their authority or confidence in them, to limiting of complaints to higher instances, developing of criticism from below.

The second level (as judged by answers: "I disapprove but still keep my silence"), the potential activity shows in people's readiness to react upon such breaches as leaving one's working place earlier than he should, using state transport for personal purposes, unjustice in delivering material values, tolerance to drawbacks, limiting of criticism. To remove these drawbacks people are ready to address the party committee, enterprise leaders, the trade-union committee, local organs, to render personal assistance, to use their free time, to speak at the workers' meeting.

The correlation between people's evaluations of the effectiveness of different means and the potential readiness of collective members to use the means to remove negative phenomena shows that addressing republican organs, the party committee, and rendering personal assistance in decision-making are considered rather influential.

The general strong confidence in republican organs to solve problems in the collective also indicates a lack of confidence in the internal possibilities. Underlying such approach are cases of leaders ignoring workers' appeals, red tape, formalism and bureaucratism in deciding urgent questions pertaining to people's interests. The January (1985) Plenum of the CC of the CPSU noted in this context: if it is possible to organize such control for the working masses over the work of elected organs, then "there is no doubt that many reasons for complaints and appeals to higher organs could be avoided, the majority of urgent questions would be decided on the spot. In the conditions of extensive democracy people could be able to regulate all the problems of their collective"[3] An important role in this work could be assigned to sociological centres for the study of public opinion in workers' collectives. By developing social activity of the collective members and extending mass media coverage of decisions on important questions pertaining to the interests of the working

people the party improves the effectivity of the control function of public opinion.

8. In accordance with the decisions of the XXVII CPSU Congress of the January (1987) Plenum of the CC of CPSU the opinion of the collective will be given more careful consideration in appointing its leaders. The enquiry of public opinion proves how deep-rooted the practice of appointing leaders for collectives without considering the opinion of the members is. More than 70% of the respondents said this was the case in their collectives. Although we should not overestimate the moral-psychological readiness of the workers at the current stage to elect leaders for all levels, particularly for the middle and top level, the present situation is in fact quite contradictory. On the one hand, the workers' collectives are not satisfied with the publicity given to transfers and appointments of leaders at their enterprises. As a rule, only one out of ten workers has "always" access to such information. One third learns it "post factum", while the rest are completely ignorant about such matters.

However, there is an unanimous agreement in the collectives in support of the principle of electing leaders at all levels. The vast majority of the workers' (80%) would approve electing a brigade leader or a master and discussing his candidature in the collective, but when it comes to the election of leaders for shops, plants, and departments, the opinions are divided equally between "against" and "for". The difference is still bigger in the case of enterprise leaders, one-third support a public election, while the rest believe in appointment "from above".

The feedback obtained in the enquiry about the democratization of production indicates that the public opinion concerning the introduction of public election of leaders (particularly for middle and top levels) has not yet reached its final form. There are still some backward views and ideas to overcome. A key role in this process belongs to mass channels of information TV, radio and press. The reorganization of consciousness needs time. Learning to live in an atmosphere of increasing publicity and democracy in society and in production still remains the main task of the collectives.

At the same time the enquiry proves that the preparations for elections in the workers' collectives need the influence of the party for creating and strengthening a positive public opinion of the candidates; national peculiarities and the structure of the collective should also be taken into account in the preparations. At this stage the leading role in forming the collective's opinion belongs to the internal sources of information.

5. The developing of publicity provides a means for overcoming conservative stereotypes that prevent the reorganization of working collectives; the result is a healthy public opinion. The probing of public opinion in the workers' collectives reveals the complexity and weakness of the reorganization process. There are collectives where everything is decided in the same way as in the "olden times", everybody is expecting instructions "from above" to begin the reorganization. Some of the respondents estimate that the reorganization commenced in their collective is still insignificant. Such evaluations give justification to the precautions taken at the XXVII CPSU Congress and the conclusions of the January (1987) Plenum of the CC Party that the "atmosphere, although favourable nowadays, still contains its contradictions and difficulties"[8]. These evaluations should not be underestimated.

The process of democratization considerably strengthens public opinion in support of creative initiatives of workers' collectives while accelerating reorganization. Almost two-thirds of the respondents are convinced that the realization of the tasks imposed by the XXVII CPSU Congress depends "completely" or "considerably" on the initiative of the workers' collectives themselves. About 50% of the respondents gave a high rating to the moral-psychological climate and psychological comfort of the collective, every second marked his participation in public activities. In such conditions the interpersonal channels of communication, as one of the internal sources of information, play a key role in forming a united public opinion in the collective. All this implies that real premises for developing the social activity of working people are currently being created, and the most important sphere in this process is

consciousness, public opinion.

The results of the enquiry, according to which nearly one-fourth of the respondents are only weakly involved in the process of reorganisation, give us reason to think about the causes of such passivity, which are most probably found outside the group consciousness. They may, for instance, be organisational. It is also possible that the staff could let some members of the collective retain their passivity.

To overcome this state of affairs we should get the full support of public opinion in the collective to prevent changes. This can be achieved by developing the publicity of reorganisation and difficulties met and overcome in this process. The mass media actually have vast potentials in solving these problems.

Notes

1. Materials of the CPSU Plenum 27-29 January 1987, Moscow 1987, p.28.
2. The enquiry "Publicity in the collective" was made by the author in the large automeasurement union "Kalinovstream" in 1988. The study population was 230 persons, among whom 38,5% were of rural nationality. The information was processed by the Informative-Calculation Centre of State-TV-Radio of USSR.
3. Materials of the Plenum of the CC of CPSU 27-29 January 1987, Moscow 1987, p.35.
4. Materials of the XXVII CPSU Congress, M., 1986, p.84.

Jyrki Jyrkiäinen

THE CONCENTRATION OF FINNISH NEWSPAPERS

An introduction to a research project and some tentative results

1. Introduction

There are at present some very profound structural changes underway in the field of mass communication in Western industrialized countries. A number of factors have contributed to this development: for instance, various technological innovations, the concentration of production, capital and marketing, and the continuous expansion of international markets. In order to understand the impact of these changes on the total structure of mass communication, we need to investigate the underlying processes.

One of the consequences of these changes has been the concentration of the media industry. As noted by UNESCO's international research commission, this concentration is the "result of several factors as illustrated by the newspaper industry: (a) basic trends in the market economies; (b) trends towards standardization of information products, messages and contents as sought by some public authorities; (c) economic pressure stemming from technological changes in publishing and distribution patterns; (d) pressures resulting from competition for circulation and advertising revenue; (e) competition between rival media; (f) uniformity of "cultural products" in general; (g) lack of economic and social need for some newspapers; (h) rising production costs and decreasing advertising revenues; (i) planned consolidation of newspapers; (j) administrative arrangements, financial incentives and tax policies discouraging independent enterprises; (k) managerial shortcomings; (l) inflation and general recession; (m) lack of new initiatives, both private and public, as well as of new financial resources."[1]

Concentration is a neutral concept in the sense that it may be understood as referring to increased organizational efficiency, to changes in the preconditions of citizen

participation, or even to deconcentration within the framework of concentration. Countertendencies are often caused not by "the new technologies as such" which challenge the media, but in the case of television, for instance, by "its greater functionality - the promises of more uses and services for differing groups without the existing constraints".[2]

The concentration of mass communication in fewer and fewer hands has caused a great deal of anxiety in Western countries during the past two decades. At the same time, there have been significant structural changes in the ownership and control of the media industry since the Second World War. These trends have sparked off a lively and heated debate among scholars and experts in which communication policy has been one of the main issues.

There have been two main trends in the public debate and in the research on concentration.[3] First, the discussion has been concerned with the relationships of different mass media: a number of studies have been carried out to determine the market shares of the different media in various sectors of mass communication (e.g. the proportion of the markets controlled by the five leading press companies, record producers, etc.). Another concern in the debate has been with the freedom of speech and press. Here, attention has been primarily paid to the effects and consequences of concentration at different levels (e.g. the impact on contents, on journalists' working conditions, the relation to constitutional rights, etc.).

Given the very limited information that is currently available on the tendencies towards concentration and deconcentration in the Finnish 'communication landscape', the Ministry of Communications, in collaboration with the University of Tampere, launched in April 1987, under the research project on new mass communication technology, a study on the concentration of mass communication. - In the following I shall briefly introduce the goals, key concepts and indicators of this project, and also describe the main characteristics of the structure of Finnish mass communication, especially from the point of view of the print media. Additionally, I shall present

some preliminary results which are clearly suggestive of new trends in concentration.

2. The aim of the study

As mentioned, there is only very limited data available on the concentration of mass communication in Finland. Since the focus of earlier studies has been rather narrow and selective, there does not exist a comprehensive analysis of the overall structure of the mass media system and of the interrelationships of the different media. The concept of concentration has also remained somewhat unclear (at least in the national context) and controversial, particularly in the sometimes heated debate on communication policy. The first aim of the present study is, therefore, to clarify and define the concept of concentration and its dimensions. With the spread of 'new' electronic media (cable TV, satellite TV, videotex), we may expect to see changes in the cultural and economic position of the traditional print media; it is in this context that we must evaluate the concepts of deconcentration and concentration.

Following this basic conceptual work, we have two main aims in our study. First, to produce a comprehensive overview of concentration in the field of Finnish mass communication today, that is, to determine the degree and nature of concentration in different media sectors; here we will also be using international comparisons. Then, after this structural analysis of the present state of concentration, our aim is to create a theoretical and empirical basis for an analysis of the cultural and communication political consequences of the present tendencies. In the assessment of future developments, one of our main concerns is with the effects of new technology at different levels. This will draw our attention to questions such as: What kind of trends and pressures is it causing? What kind of cultural and political stimuli are required in order that an optimal basis could be created for the growth and diversified utilization of mass communication facilities under the different future alternatives, considering the conditions of international

concentration and its impact at the national level? To what extent is deconcentration possible within the framework of, or parallel with, concentration? In the field of electronic mass communication, for example, there is already in operation an alternative of the future: so-called video workshops and electronic message transmission (Teletel in France, Bildschirmtext in the BRD). New communication technology may provide individual citizens and minority groups with ready access to the media, which may help to serve their rights according to their own specific needs.[4]

3. The concept and measurement of concentration

The general term concentration refers to the decreasing dispersal of ownership in advanced capitalist economies, where the means of production in various market sectors have fallen into the ownership of progressively fewer and larger groups.[5] The dynamics and consequences of this process within the different sectors of the mass communication industries have been a major concern of research during the past two decades. The degree of concentration in these industries is indicated by a concentration index. The most frequently used measure of concentration is the four-eight-twenty firm concentration ratio, which indicates the cumulative market share of the top four or eight or twenty firms in a specific industry or market.[6] Another popular indicator is based on the proportion of a market sector controlled by the five top firms.[7] Comparisons over time are often carried out to see whether the concentration ratio has increased, thereby implying a greater degree of monopoly power within the industry. Handy rules in the evaluation of concentration are: if the four-firm ratio is equal to or greater than 50 percent, or if the eight-firm ratio is equal to or greater than 75 percent, then the industry or market is highly concentrated; if the four-firm ratio is between 33 and 50 percent, or if the eight-firm ratio is between 50 and 75 percent, then the industry or market is moderately concentrated. All other cases indicate the presence

of some degree of competition within the industry or market sector. This sort of measure has been frequently applied in the assessment of national concentration.[8] A popular technique for illustrating concentration of power within a market is the Lorenz Curve, which graphically highlights inequality of market shares among firms.[9]

4. The present state of the press in Finland

In the case of the print media, it is standard practice to use certain classification; the press categories in Finland are relatively permanent.[10] Newspapers proper or **dailies** appear a minimum of three times a week. Their content must consist primarily of reporting and commentary, dealing with events of a political or social character. **Local** papers or weeklies appear at most twice a week, and deal mainly with the events of their own circulation area; the circulation of these papers is based on prepaid subscriptions. The publication of **advertising papers** is based exclusively on the sale of advertising space, since the papers are distributed free of charge ('gratuitous' papers). These papers appear locally at least twice a month. **Magazines** include all those press products appearing at least four times a year which do not in every respect conform to the criteria established for newspapers.

At the end of 1986, a total of 100 dailies were published in Finland; the figure for local newspapers was 173, for gratuitous papers almost 150, for commercial or general-interest magazines 150, and for other magazines more than 1,000.[11]

In 1986 the total circulation of dailies was 3,152,400 copies. The increase in total circulation has for several years been 2.5-3 % per year, but for 1986 only 1 %. The average circulation in the category of dailies was around 30,000 copies.

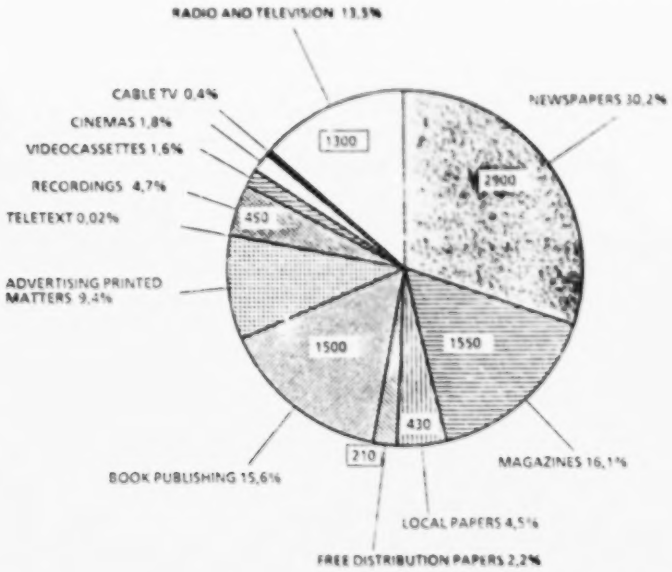
The number of titles issued in the category of local papers has increased thirtyfold since 1950, and total circulation has increased almost fivefold during the same period. In 1985, the total circulation of local newspapers stood at 900,000 copies.

The biggest local papers have a circulation of roughly 20,000 copies, and the average is around 5,000-6,000 copies.

The first free of charge paper was established in Finland in 1957. The only information available on these papers concerns the number of copies printed. In 1986, it stood at 3.2 million, which is slightly more than the total circulation of newspapers proper. The average number of printed copies is around 25,000-30,000.

The economic structure and breakdown of turnover in the Finnish mass communication industry is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Breakdown of turnover in Finnish mass communication industry in 1985 (FIM million)



The press represents 53 % of the total, the electronic media 22 %. Total turnover in the industry for 1984 was FIM 9,600 million, or 3.5 % of GNP.[12]

During the 1970s the annual average growth in total turnover was 6-7 percent. In the early 1980s, the growth has continued at more or less the same rate, at around 5-6 percent per year. In terms of turnover, all categories of the printed press have grown during the past ten years, although the growth rate of magazines has been very slow. The highest growth figures are found for local (+11 %) and free of charge papers (+13 %). The turnover of dailies is also on the increase.

5. The development of the daily press

The number of titles published in the category of dailies has remained more or less unchanged during the past few decades. Since 1974, seven dailies have been discontinued. In 1960-1973, the number of discontinued dailies was 15, and in 1946-1959, a total of 21 dailies were discontinued. Table 1 shows the number of dailies discontinued since 1947 according to the political orientation of the press.

Table 1. Number of dailies discontinued since 1947, by political orientation

	Number of titles
Conservative Party (Kok.)	13
Centre Party (Kesk.)	1
Swedish People's Party (RKP)	4
Social Democrats (SDP)	4
People's Democrats (SKDL)	8
Others (SPP, TPSL, STP)	3
Independent	9
	42

The following table compares the political structure of the newspaper press in 1946, 1972 and 1986:

Table 2. Number of dailies discontinued since 1947, by political orientation

	Number of titles		
	1946	1972	1986
Conservative Party (Kok.)	21	6	5
Centre Party (Kesk.)	17	14	14
Liberal Party (LKP)	3	-	-
Rural Party (SMP)	-	1	-
Swedish People's Party (RKP) + independent Swedish-language dailies	10	6	11
Social Democrats (SDP)	14	11	10
People's Democrats (SKDL)	9	8	7
TPSL	-	1	
	74	47	47
Independent	23	47	53
Total	97	94	100

According to Table 2, the number of conservative dailies has declined more sharply than one might expect on the basis of the total number of dailies which have been discontinued or merged with other papers. The difference is due to the disengagement of dailies from party affiliations; there has been a clear tendency towards political independence.

Dailies or local newspapers are published in Finland in some 200 towns or municipalities. Of these, only about ten percent have two papers. There are seven towns where more than two papers are published. Some kind of explicit (self-defined) alternative in political orientation is found only between the papers publishing in ten localities.[13]

At the end of 1986, the number of dailies published in Helsinki (including Vantaa) was 13; in Oulu and Vaasa four dailies were published; in Joensuu, Pori, Tampere and Turku three; and two dailies appeared in Hämeenlinna, Kokkola, Kotka, Kuopio, Loviisa, Maarianhamina, Pietarsaari, Porvoo, Seinäjoki and Uusikaupunki. There were thus in 1986 a total of 17

localities where more than one daily newspaper was published; in 1946 the figure was 26.

6. Some indexes describing the concentration of Finnish newspapers

There are no major newspaper chains in Finland. In terms of circulation and annual volume (circulation multiplied by annual number of issues) figures, the largest newspapers and enterprises accounted for the following shares in 1975, 1980 and 1985:

Table 3. Share of largest newspapers, enterprises and largest company as percent of total circulation and volume in 1975, 1980 and 1985.[11]

	Share of circulation			Share of annual volume		
Newspapers	1975	1980	1985	1975	1980	1985
4	28.0 %	28.0	28.3	30.9	32.3	32.3
8	41.0	40.9	40.9	44.7	45.4	45.1
20	64.0	64.9	64.8	70.4	69.7	69.5
Enterprises 1)						
4	30.9	32.6	36.4	35.5	37.3	40.3
Largest company 2)						
1	16.5	18.4	19.6	18.9	21.1	22.1

1) Sanoma Oy, Tampereen Kirjapaino Oy, Oy Turun Sanomat, Uusi Suomi Oy

2) Sanoma Oy

If we examine the trends in concentration at five-year intervals over the period 1975-1985 on the basis of annual

volume - which gives a more truthful picture than an analysis of changes in circulation - we may note that in all three years, the share of annual volume of the four largest newspapers is just over 30 percent; of the eight laryest papers around 45 percent; and of the 20 largest papers around 70 percent. However, these figures have been reached by counting the averages for **newspapers**. The table for the four largest **enterprises** shows higher percentages because the biggest company publishes the two biggest papers, one of which is an evening paper.

If we now examine these figures in the light of the "handy rules" mentioned above, it would seem that on the basis of the four-firm ratio (we have not yet completed our calculations for the eight-firm and twenty-firm ratios) the newspaper industry in Finland is "moderately concentrated". Over the period 1975-1985, the four-firm ratio has increased by almost 5 percent.

The biggest individual company in the business is Sanoma Oy, whose two papers have the widest circulation in the country (Helsingin Sanomat with a circulation in 1985 of 427,000 on weekdays, and Ilta-Sanomat with a circulation of 184,000 in 1985); these two papers increased their combined share of the total annual volume of daily newspapers by some 3 percent between 1975 and 1985.

Concluding remarks

It has been proposed that press concentration is detrimental to the reader; that it will have a negative impact on journalists' job opportunities in the future; and that it seriously threatens the position of owners of smaller units. It has also been argued that the declining number of dailies available to the reader narrows the spectrum of the press and also the variety of viewpoints in the press and, importantly, that it promotes conformity to the values prevalent in the 'centre' of society and undermines minority values.

On the other hand, there are also writers who feel that the

phenomenon of concentration in industrialized countries should not be presented in a "simplistic way or in a totally negative light ... press concentration leads to more efficiency through rationalization of organization, management and production and by placing central resources at the disposal of smaller units".[14]

A study of concentration inevitably leads to an analysis of the structures and dynamics prevalent in a given society; from this perspective, we will be able to identify the forces and powers which are actually concentrating in this process. In order that we could understand the relationships between ownership, control and power and their effects on, for example, the content of the media or on journalists' working conditions, we need to do a great deal of theoretical groundwork to develop our conceptual and methodological tools. In the present field of research, we are merely taking our first, careful steps.

Notes

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8. Lisbon, op.cit., p. 118.

9. Dixon, Raymond B. & Kuhn, Virginia, "Communication in Three Dimensions", Computers of Quantitative Quarterly, vol. 892/8791, pp. 1-34.

10. Parts I and II of the Report of the Government Committee on Communication Policy, Investigations and Recommendations concerning Radio and Some Questions, Committee Reports 1972:80 I and 1972:80 II, Stockholm, Norstedts Tryckeri Publishing House, 1978, p. 113.

11. All the empirical data in this paper are collected from the Minutes of the Parliamentary Press Committee, Konferenser, 1983/78, Meeting Notes Subject Freedom Press, Publication of Newspaper of the Finnish Newspaper Publishers, No. 9/1978-1983, Investigation Classification Carried by Swedish Authorities (p) 1983-1985, Personal Observations.
Statistical information on mass communication, culture, sports and youth activities in 1980-1983, Central Statistical

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C. Gonzalez and R. Kuehnemann

THE NEED FOR PUBLIC OPINION: ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATION

In general, when consumers and large-scale tasks of coordinating are being handled with, the planning and functioning of public opinion and its interaction with educational bodies are of even greater importance. A socialist democracy represents the genuine power of the people in terms of the increasing social and political activity of the masses and it promotes a complete development of different types, means and channels of public opinion.

The mass media and propaganda system belong to the most powerful tools for the formation and expression of public opinion.

In a society of public opinion formed mass media and propaganda contribute to improving the objectivization of social phenomena and orientation of the masses.

The mass media and the propaganda system are included in the objectivization scheme because they can help the party shape people's outlook and values. Thus public opinion in the most urgent social problems.

The leading channel in the formation and expression of public opinion in the Soviet Th, whose audience cannot check the whole population of the country. Mass work is conducted by the organizational studies carried out during the past decade.

According to second studies TV has become one of the channels of political information about domestic and foreign issues. About 90% of the population watch TV regularly.

Television combats certain deficiencies in the party in solving important social and economic problems. In interviews and public forecast concerns, problems, discussions the search for ideas matters, shapes the economic thinking of the people and thus directly promotes the participation of socialist production and the social development of society as a whole.

The formation of public opinion by means of television is a complex and partly unexplored process. It involves

= formulation of the social problem by consultation of specialists

- accumulation of information on a given problem, its popularization, access to it
- presence of a polemic element;
- presence of commentary, corroboration of information;
- orientation towards practical activities.

The formation of public opinion on a certain problem depends greatly on the way the problem is presented in programme, a result. The result is affected by a host of factors: the image of an information source, periodical repetitions, the amount of time devoted to the problem, the target group, certain programme arrangements (time shift), seasonal prevalence, time zones, etc., the use of social and psychological factors and so on.

A powerful tool in the shaping of public opinion is a long-term analysis of the problem and information on its results given to the public to stimulate its interest and to supplement inadequate opinions.

The key factors of a successful formation of public opinion by means of TV are public interests with a scientific basis, the differentiation of information, and presenting the views of persons including staff leaders who have a high prestige and are popular with the public.

An orientation towards the interests of the working class, which in fact reflect the interests of society as a whole, provides the methodological basis for adequate television information and public opinion. A general aim in TV programming is to make the contemporary working man with his thoughts and motivations a real hero of TV programmes.

This explains why the Soviet TV and the press in general are characterized by the active involvement of the masses of working people in discussing and solving state problems, in active and creative participation in all social and political campaigns and economic decisions, such as the discussion of the draft law on the State Enterprise, party documents put forth before Congresses, the solutions of economic and social development of the country, social problems and in the realization of different reforms, etc.

In discussing the above and other similar documents millions

of the working people - representing all groups of Soviet society - wrote letters to television and took part in TV programmes. The discussions revealed a wide range of opinions and propositions made by workers, collective farmers, scientists, intellectuals, party and non-party members.

The public is at the same time both the object and the subject of television: through television it participates in discussing a problem and poses questions.

In the Soviet TV there seems to be a clear tendency towards programmes with a public participation (e.g. "Telemost", "TV Bridge"), towards programmes based on correspondence or inviting people to attend to the programme. There is also a tendency to extend the number of authors beyond the regular staff, to develop broad and comprehensive cooperation with different groups of working people and with public organizations.

TV discussions and debates on acute social problems involving masses of people are an effective means of public participation in social management and administration.

Along with the growing impact of TV propaganda on public opinion the effect of public opinion on TV is also enhanced: it enables television effectively to reflect real trends in development in society.

The letters coming from the public can be regarded as an important channel of public opinion expression and an indicator of the efficiency of television. There is nothing like TV mail in our country: the Central TV alone receives on average over 1.5 million letters a year. Moreover, the correspondence rates are still growing (for instance, in 1986 the number of letters sent to the Central TV exceeded the total of 1.3 million for the previous year by 800,000). The content of correspondence is also changing: the number of complaints has decreased considerably, letters are now more constructive and socially-oriented by nature. These letters also deal with problems of interest to the state (state policy, reform of the economic system, methods for saving energy and material resources), with the ways of solving urgent problems and with negative phenomena.

Letters to TV are an important channel in the liaison of

party and the masses, a means of the expression of public opinion. These letters are examined in typical reviews of mail and they serve to highlight the most urgent problems, put forward principal questions of improvements in administration and decision-making in social and economic issues. In 1986, for instance, the televised mail reviews covered among others the following topics: "On mail addressed to the XXVII CPSU Congress", "On creative activities of masses as a basis for acceleration", "On authorities", "What is interfering with the restructuring process?", "On environment", "On youth leisure organisation". Thus the mail coming to the Soviet TV is not only "feedback", it really affects adminstration and decision-making.

The mail is either discussed in special programmes or used as a constructive element in ordinary programmes. Letters from the public are used to produce topical programmes, to find sources of positive experience and negative manifestations, to discuss particular problems, to improve telecasting, to satisfy public demands. The letters to TV have prompted such programmes as "The World Today", "The mail of these days", "Our garden", "KVN" (The club of gay and witted people) has been resumed after a long period of silence, and a number of traditional programmes have undergone significant reshaping.

Due to public demands the second show of the programme "The world today" had been reintroduced, the time and other aspects of the show have been revised in the light of the mail received.

Public conferences - meetings of TV heads and members of editorial boards with workers in workshops or in clubs of factories or plants or with agricultural workers in villages - offer an efficient channel of feedback.

Besides the traditional methods of studying public opinion there are also sociological studies which help increase TV efficiency and optimize the use of all TV mechanisms. These studies offer a picture of the actual state of mass consciousness, changes in it, its structure, the dynamics of the needs and interests of various social and demographic groups, the extent of their involvement in other sources of information, motives of choice, the adequacy of programme content, public

interests, the efficiency of TV propaganda links, and so on.

Although representatives of different social and age groups share the same economic, political and social outlook, according to the studies they have different views on certain problems and specific aspects of telecasting.

The studies for example show that in rural areas TV is the main source of shaping opinions, of satisfying cultural and spiritual demands of the people, and thus it rates first among others mass media and channels of propaganda and has a considerable effect on the structure and nature of leisure time in rural areas.

The studies also show that special programmes for rural dwellers do not fully consider and satisfy the requirements and interests of all social and demographic groups of rural population.

The studies of workers' opinions on the Central TV programmes show that while addressing an average man in programmes on socialist emulation, economic scientific and technological achievements) TV often fails to take the specific characteristics of the worker audience addressed into account.

The studies conducted by the USSR State TV and Radiobroadcasting Committee in 1970, 1978, and 1983 concerning children's programmes and in 1972, 1977, 1981 and 1983 concerning programmes for youth reveal a clear tendency towards television playing an increasing role in the life of the younger generation, towards growing audiences of youth programmes, but at the same time there seems to be a lack of special programmes for rural youth.

A systematic and extensive study of audiences, their dynamics, and an analysis of the mail contribute to raising the ideological and cultural level of telecasting, to perfecting its optimal planning. However, for the information to make a more effective impact on the population as a whole studies of public opinion on problems of social life touched upon in TV programmes are needed.

It is important to study mass media and public opinion not separately but in their interaction.

Thus far a purposeful study of public opinion by TV and radio specialists aimed at a greater affect on different aspects of life in our society has been limited to some spontaneous efforts, but there are some succesful examples, among the latest is a project by Estonian sociologists working for Gosteleradio, "Public Opinion" (On the XXVII CPSU Congress).

A comprehensive study of public opinion in the context of mass media and the propaganda system would provide a basis for disseminating scientifically grounded propaganda and for disclosing the relationship between public opinion and TV, radio and press activities, their impact on the formation and expression of public opinion.

To determine the public opinion on certain problems it is necessary to orient mass media and the propaganda system to the problem, to improve the process of propaganda and to assess the efficiency of mass media against public opinion.

Mass information on the results of public opinion studies, in turn, is effective in stimulating interest in certain problems.

The growing role of television in society has also brought up a need for more active efforts to develop different types of TV criticism, which is also one channel for the formation and expression of public opinion in regard to the problems of telecasting. Many central newspapers have introduced special columns on TV. In these columns one can find leading critics, reviewers, information on TV according to public rating.

For example, at the request of readers "Uchitelskaya Gazeta" 3 years ago introduced a special column, "TV: success and disputes", which gives a highly qualified analysis on the Central TV programmes. The newspaper "Izvestia" publishes a weekly column "TV and We".

Weekly TV reviews are found in "Sovetskaya Kultura", "Komsomolskaya Pravda", "Literaturnaja Gazeta", "Moscovsky Komsomoletz", "Liternaturnaja Rossia", "Leninskoye Znamya" and in many others.

New columns have appeared on the pages of "Pravda" (a monthly TV review), "Journalist" (Reader's interview), "Moskovskaya Pravda" (Only an Impression), "Lesnaya Promyshlennost" (The

reporter on duty) and others.

A number of newspapers ("Sovetskaya Kultura", "Sovetskaya Rossia", "Izvestia" and others) have special columns which make use of readers' letters and phone calls to the publishing offices, "Literaturnaja Gazeta" features expert ratings of TV programmes. In fact we are witnessing a new phenomenon taking shape, a reciprocal feedback. A growing interest of TV audience, which coincides with the beginning of the restructuring process after the XXVII CPSU Congress and is accompanied by the press paying more attention to television problems (on average about 40 publications come out each week in central and Moscow press), has resulted in new forms of interaction between TV and the press.

The press centre of the USSR State TV and Radiobroadcasting Committee has been set up to ensure publicity and to provide information on TV and radio broadcasting problems for newspapers, news agencies and journals, to hold press conferences and meetings between the heads of the Committee, members of editorial boards and journalists, to arrange TV reviews, to publish information bulletins for the press, etc.

At the end of 1986 the press expressed its high appreciation for the creative activities of TV in the restructuring process, in the development of openness and democracy, in the solution of specific problems of social and political life in the country. As an article in "Sovetskaya Kultura" entitled "TV: Opportunities of the genre" said, "From the very first days of the introduction of a state control the All-Union screen has found its very own way of participation in propaganda and interpretation of this highly important economic measure" (February 3, 1987).

Many pages of newspapers carry publications on the restructuring of TV itself. The press observes radical changes in certain programmes and, first of all, in the programme "Vremya" (Time), it encourages live programmes and the polemic nature of many panels, and believes that the programmes about our contemporaries are rather successful. The weekly "Nedelya" at the end of 1986 stressed that "the main character on TV

screen, the object of attention and subject of action is the man" (Nedelya, No 52).

An ever growing significance of TV in the life of Soviet people and corresponding interests of the press make TV criticism a special branch of journalism, in contrast to the occasional separate publications of the previous years, and this implies a new approach to TV programme analysis. An established mechanism of systematic and thorough press publications on TV is another effective means for expressing public opinion formed under the influence of TV.

As organs of openness the Soviet press, TV and radio are supposed to become more effective channels of criticism and self-criticism, of public control over the realization of decisions taken by the party and government.

Ministers, heads of central and republican departments take part in TV programmes dealing with the most urgent problems, answer questions asked by the audience, and tell about the steps taken.

Particularly welcomed are the critical shows of the programme "Vremya", especially "Editorial Board on a Trip", which offers a picture of the restructuring process at a local level.

The Central TV supervises the fulfilment of the obligations assumed, patronizes the construction sites of the five-year plan, gives follow-up reports examining what has been done after earlier exposures or failures, takes an active part in the party economic policy on stimulating mass creative activities, initiates campaigns.

In February 1987 the CPSU Central Committee, the USSR Council of Ministers and the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions adopted the resolution "On the development of people's scientific and technological creative activities" which was partly provoked by the special Central TV programme "You can make it" addressed to young people.

Most of the Central TV programmes have specific target groups, are problem-oriented and factual by nature and characterized by a steady and constructive approach, and all this enables TV propaganda to have a marked influence on the

functioning of various parts of the social mechanism, promotes the formation of a positive public opinion on a number of vital social problems.

The Soviet TV is nowadays more actively involved in influencing international public opinion in regard to certain urgent problems of contemporary international life (e.g. war and peace, environment, urbanization), its role in international relations is growing, since the exchange of TV news has increased and our TV production is on sale at international forums, some Soviet TV programmes have been shown in the USA, we have witnessed the birth of "TV bridges" with a number of countries, etc.

The economic achievements and fundamental values of socialism, the peaceful foreign policy of the CPSU, our Leninist principles of peaceful coexistence of states with different social and economic systems, today play a decisive role in the shaping of international public opinion.

The active joint participation of the USSR and world public opinion in solving problems of war and peace, the evident results of the struggle for peace are making a great contribution to the present international trend in development aimed at enhancing the influence of the public masses on international relations.

The solution of global problems demands joint cooperation of all peoples. This calls for a more effective use of mass media and primarily of TV for the formation of public opinion in all member states of the OIRT.

Scientific cooperation on a new qualitative basis is needed not only to study public opinion and the means of its formation and expression but also to mobilize it to international cooperation and to joint efforts of all peoples in the interests of peace and democracy.

V.A. Mansurov

MASS MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION: PROBLEMS OF INTERACTION

Public opinion as a state of mass consciousness is far more older than mass media. Long before the introduction of modern technical means of communication there existed such channels of public opinion expression as the participation of large masses of population in various discussions and in the solution of public problems, in the activity of various public organizations of social administration or amateur organizations. This is a form of direct democracy where we find the most active formation of public opinion and its most adequate and efficient expression.

The development of society brought changes in the conditions of the functioning of public opinion. Economic development increased the productivity of labour and produced a considerable surplus of leisure. Improvements in technical production required first general literacy and then continuous improvement of general and technical education. People with advanced education joined the political movement and in the end gained the freedom of word, press, meetings, and mass organizations, the very political conditions for the functioning of public opinion.

The development of an accessible system of information, openness, and the effectiveness of public opinion - these are other conditions for effective public opinion moulding and expression, a function performed by press, radio and TV.

The apperance and development of mass media had a considerable influence the functioning of public opinion. Its control over different social institutions, administrative bodies included, could become objective reality. The general public did not only form its attitude towards their activity but could quickly and sucessfully inform all members of society about it.

The effectiveness of public opinion is today clearly demonstrated through mass media activity. The variety of points of view on the most acute and urgent problems, clear and

accurate argumentation, open discussion - all this helps people form independent opinions and views on social problems and processes. Critical essays based on the letters of readers, viewers and listeners find their immediate operative response in measures taken under the control of the interested population groups.

It goes without saying that such an attitude towards public opinion expressed through mass media enhances its prestige and consolidates the idea that public opinion presents a real active force. The result is visible in higher activity of the Soviet people, more frequent appeals to mass media and other social institutions, higher number of participants in nationwide debates of bills, state decisions and better control over administrative activity on all levels. Lenin's demand that "non-Party people should control all state affairs" is being realized.[2]

More often than not public opinion performs an expressive function by taking a definite stand towards the reality and evaluating it.

Public opinion can perform a consultative function as well, giving advice on different solutions for debatable problems. Social institutions and mass media are supposed to be interested in its advice. Public opinion uses mass media as a mouthpiece and as a means of exerting pressure on these institutions. The effective fulfilment of this function creates a necessary basis for the performance of directive functions when it expresses views of imperative character.

Public opinion has several characteristics. There is a threshold of accessibility to public opinion, for there are elements in social life that possess the ability of direct reflection; this means that some of them cannot be measured by opinions.

Mass media can either 1) reduce this threshold of accessibility by means of information and by doing so extend the possibilities of public opinion in measuring and evaluating the information or it can 2) avoid attracting attention to some events but instead focus public opinion on those problems that

corresponds to its possibilities. In practice this means attracting attention to the problems of real or supposed public interests.

The possibilities of mass media impact on this side of public opinion - public interest - are great, since frequent and permanent appeals to certain problems are bound draw attention to them.

Mass media are however not monopolistic: public opinion is moulded by other sources of information as well, and if a public opinion on an issue has already been established, then mass media with all its sophistication and technology must take it into account.

Another characteristic of public opinion is debatability. Out of the whole range of questions of public interest public opinion focuses on those that are debatable, that can be viewed and evaluated from different angles.

How can mass media influence this characteristic of public opinion?

1. They can present all sides of a discussion in equal terms;

2. They can pick one side as a correct view and ignore the others;

3. They can give arguments disproving all existing views and try to create a new stand and a new public opinion.

Many scientific problems do not become objects of public opinion, since society lacks competence on them - a sufficient volume and level of knowledge and adequate scientific and analytic means to create a competent opinion. This is the organic and objective incompetence of public opinion. Another type of incompetence can be created by blocking access to relevant information on a problem easily understood by public opinion.

The improvement of the mass media system creates objective conditions for providing the whole population with broad and comprehensive information on the problems of public interest. However, we often encounter ignorance of large population groups arising from the failure of mass media themselves to give adequate and carefully selected information to support the

emphasis on public opinion.

In the educational field mass media can raise the level of knowledge, augment its grasp people with the methods of independent analysis thus creating a sound basis for competent public opinion on an extensive range of problems.

A developed and competent public opinion can in the turn serve not only as a controller and consultant but it can also demand changes in the principles and objectives of mass media activity or the activity of any other social institution. In this case mass media are unlikely to be allies to public opinion which naturally reduces its effectiveness.

Sometimes mass media inspire public opinion artificially on problems that need special preparation, and then some social groups can use the propaganda for artificially engineered public opinion for their own purposes.

Mass media is the most effective way to inform broad masses of people about a problem of public interest they can inspire definite ideas and feelings, stimulate or influence exchange of views, in other words, to speed up the transition from individual to public opinion. Mass media provide necessary knowledge, build human relations, encourage people that their knowledge and stands are genuine.

In reality only mass media can help people exchange information efficiently. The interest of mass media in public opinion is constantly growing, because this interest is indispensable for efficient molding and influencing of the public. This results in another dimension of interaction special centres for the study of public opinion are being attached to mass media.

Thus there is an interaction between mass media and public opinion at different stages of the development mass media influence different aspects of public opinion while public opinion influences the activity of mass media through its three major functions.

Notes

[1] R.J.C. Baker "Complete Works" p. 89, pp. 126.

Literature

[1] Bradley B.M. "Opinions of the world and the world of opinions" p. 212, Publishing, 1967.
[2] Bradley B.M. Walker B.M. (eds.) "More information is a social (adverbial) term" p. 212, Publishing, 1985.
[3] Vandenbroeke H.J. (ed.) "Brave and public opinion" p. 212, Books, 1986.

R. Saunders and R. Wiseman

THE ROLE OF BASE BOOKS IN THE PUBLICATION OF CHILD CONSCIOUSNESS OF DIRECTORY OF PUBLIC OPINION

The Democratization of society and planned development have the main economic of the social change that is taking place in Soviet society, the individuals this process open new prospects of participation in social life. Among the most important forms of participation are open discussions on various social and political problems and on the direction of social development in general. The discussions bring forth the interests of different groups and complex contradictions, but it also forms new groups united by common viewpoints and guarantee.

Besides official groups that are active in the fields of economy and politics there are also an increasing number of informal groups united by spiritual interests, common goals, ideological ideals or even the same way of life. It means that the increasing significance of public opinion in social life and the variable active role of mass media as a form of planned give rise to new spiritual special groups which assist in influence of public opinion. We individuals may belong to such group only through the activity of mass media, as a regular subscribers or participants to a publications or a chapters of information, with no regard to his actual social relationships.

In the process of public opinion formation the territories of different social cultures have more rights to an individual observer who then gets an opportunity to compare the opinions of various groups of different levels. **The individual becomes the subject of a conscious activities of the social group** to respect to the same wider discussions. Methods a public discussion is shared the boundaries between groups, therefore between theories of interrelationships and the central nature of mutual, personal experiences gradually this predominate. In an early stage of the public opinion formation we therefore encounter different individual opinion groups, and the only way a general collective opinion can be formed is through the public juxtapositions of opinions and responses of different views. The

formation of public opinion lies in reaching a social consensus and a voluntary prioritization of certain general values and interests as opposed to more private values and interests.

This confrontation and exchange of interests is a process that also alters the original nature of social subjects.

According to Mark, already opposed groups place every member in the position of a "private, averaged individual". Under the terms of alienation an individual sits himself of this normative framework and becomes a moral and independent personality who voluntarily finds his way to a social group who shares his views.

We know as the development of pleasant proceeds beyond the direct interaction of groups, mass media become the forum of the confrontation and resolving of social stands. Albeit mass media are always easily obtained, the only way they can attain real publicity is to become a means accessible to all groups and strata of population to declare and to defend their stands and interests in matters of social importance.

The development of democracy and social life will also bring the role of a message sender in mass media within the reach of the members of all social groups. Up till now the attainment of this goal has been hampered not only by the bureaucratic mechanisms of administration and supervision but also by the operational principles of mass media, traditions and conventions of journalism as well as social and cultural obstacles to the active participation of certain population groups and strata in the process of communication.

The mass media will also enable us gradually to create the communicational conditions for the development of new groups and for the union of the values underlying the activities of these groups. At first such groups will only represent their united opinions but later they may evolve into subjects of social action that will contribute to the social information at hand.

There is no doubt that this process where new subjects of public opinion are being formed is a long-lying change in the structure of publicity in our society. Mass communication, which

hitherto has mainly served to witness decisions already taken will now become an instrument for developing social reflections and consciousness offering a way for changing structures of society from below.

Pertti Suhonen
Reuna Virtanen

HOW THE FINNS REACTED TO THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR ACCIDENT

The Chernobyl nuclear accident at the end of April 1986 affected the Finnish public mainly through the publicity that it generated. There was no way that people could sense the increased levels of radiation, and the accident had very little visible effect on day-to-day life in Finland. In some parts of the country, farmers kept their cattle inside after the winter for a few weeks longer than normal. In the early summer tourists from the Western nations cancelled holidays they had booked in Finland because they believed the country had been badly affected by radiation; this caused the tourism business to suffer slight losses.

People were much more affected through the publicity; it is unlikely that any other event has received such extensive coverage in the Finnish mass media. The dramatic nature of the accident and of the newspaper headlines increased the impact of the information that was reported.

News about the accident quickly reached almost everyone in Finland. A broad section of the public was deeply concerned about the effects of the accident; this was revealed by letters to editors, participation in radio phone-in programmes, and the large number of enquiries received at the Finnish Centre for Radiation and Nuclear Safety.

This article will use material collected in interviews conducted throughout the country to examine Finnish public reactions to the accident and the way these reactions subsided. The examination will focus on two themes: attitudes to nuclear power and anxiety about the effects of the accident.

The Finns and nuclear power

The pros and cons of nuclear power have represented a main theme in the debate on energy policy in Finland throughout the present decade; other sources of energy have often been discussed only as alternatives to nuclear power.

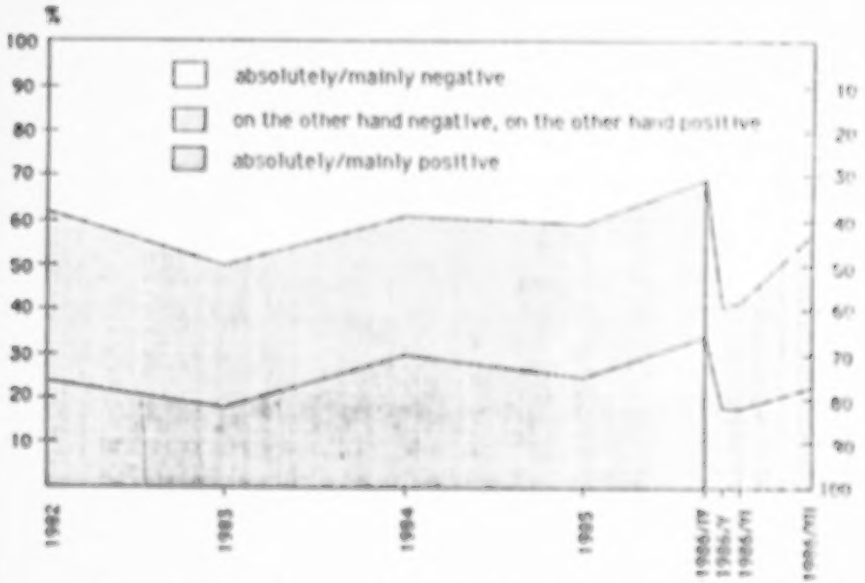
In April 1986 slightly more than half of all Finns stated that they actively followed the public debate on energy policy. The figure went up by 20 percentage points following the Chernobyl accident and the explosive increase in public discussion that it brought about.

Television audience research, however, has shown that there was no increase in the number of people watching news and current affairs programmes during the period following the accident: in fact there was a slight fall in the numbers (Yleisöti-Lehtolehdenlukijatutkimus 1987, 7-10). Two conclusions may be drawn from this: first, the consequences of the accident apparently did not cause very widespread anxiety in the general public. Fear would have made people more interested in the news and the latest information on the accident and its effects.

Second, it can be inferred that the increased interest in nuclear power and in matters related to energy mainly involved those who normally watch news and current affairs programmes on TV. It may be that the accident merely meant these were followed more carefully. People's increased interest in the energy debate may well have been directed towards newspapers, so articles about nuclear power were read more carefully than before.

As far as public opinion is concerned, there have not been significant changes in Finland in support for nuclear power during the present decade. Support increased slightly from 1983 onwards, and reached its highest level in April 1986, just before the Chernobyl accident. At that time public opinion was split equally three ways: one third of the population was in favour of the use of nuclear power as an energy source, one third was against it, and one third considered that nuclear power had both benefits and drawbacks.

FIGURE 1.
What is Your attitude towards nuclearpower in Finland?



The accident at Chernobyl caused an abrupt fall in support for nuclear power. During the first weeks after the accident, the number of those opposed to nuclear power rose to 60%. The proportion still in favour in May 1986 was 18%, which is the same level as in 1983.

Fairly soon after the accident the distribution of public opinion began to change back to its former pattern as the wave of publicity and the criticism directed towards nuclear power subsided. In particular the proportion of those opposing nuclear power decreased rapidly, and in December - a little over six months after the accident - the proportion opposed was already smaller than it had been in 1983.

Nevertheless it is obvious that public opinion will be permanently marked by the Chernobyl accident. This is suggested by research carried out in the USA following the Harrisburg meltdown. The swing in public opinion away from nuclear power

soon began to move back in the opposite direction, but opinion did not return to the level it had been before the accident. (Nealey-Melber-Rankin 1983, 15-22).

Following Harrisbury, people were also more likely to waver in their attitudes to nuclear power. They followed the public debate more closely and let it influence their opinion.

The extensive publicity surrounding the accident at Chernobyl increased people's awareness of the risks involved in nuclear power, and some people will be permanently influenced by this. After all, what happened at Chernobyl had been considered impossible, or at least extremely unlikely.

Public anxiety

Until the spring of 1986 the Finnish public had hardly considered the risks involved in nuclear power. Through publicity, the public became aware of the radioactive fallout at Chernobyl and at the same time of a new threat to human life and to the environment.

When people realize that something they value is being threatened, they feel insecure and become anxious. The more important the value, and the clearer the threat, the greater their anxiety.

This element of anxiety in the Finnish public's reaction to the Chernobyl accident and the relevant coverage in the mass media will be examined on the basis of research material collected by the Finnish Gallup Organisation throughout the country during April, June and December 1986. The respondents were asked to identify what they felt most anxious about; they were allowed to answer in their own words, without preset alternatives.

The research material used does not provide any information about public anxiety immediately following the news of the accident, nor does it indicate people's minor worries, since the respondents were asked to describe what they were most anxious about.

It is important to bear in mind that changes in the most

important causes of public anxiety are interdependent, and the appearance of a new cause may in part be due to other causes becoming less threatening.

Table 1. Causes of public anxiety in Finland in 1986.

Primary concern	April	June	December
	%	%	%
Environmental pollution	3	12	8
Nuclear power and energy	4	8	3
Health	4	7	7
Total	11	27	18
Employment and livelihood	16	19	25
Threat of war and world situation	30	22	20
Other	22	16	18
No cause for anxiety	13	10	16
Don't know	8	6	3
Total	100	100	100
N	1202	497	1006

Research has shown that of the different values related to their own lives, Finns rate health as the most important (Suhonen-Vesa-Virtanen 1985, 16-30). In view of this, the proportion of people stating that their health gave them most cause for anxiety is extremely small. It appears that the number of people anxious about their health increased only slightly against the background of the risk inherent in the increased exposure to radiation following Chernobyl and the public debate on the subject. This does not mean that a larger proportion of the Finns were not anxious about their health to some extent, but they felt the other causes for anxiety were stronger. It is also possible that anxiety about health was more widespread in the period immediately following the accident, but had already

subsided by June.

In April the proportion of respondents stating that the environment and pollution gave them most cause for anxiety was smaller than that of people anxious about their health. Chernobyl caused a distinct change in this pattern, and the number putting the environment as the primary cause for anxiety had increased by a factor of four to 12% by June. However even this proportion is not particularly high in view of the environmental catastrophe that had taken place. Around half of the increase had disappeared by December.

Concern about pollution is not entirely divorced from the anxiety caused by risks to the health. People are often concerned about pollution precisely because it is a health risk. In the same way nuclear power becomes a cause for anxiety because of the threat it represents to the environment and the health.

In April 11% of all interviewees stated that one of these three factors represented their main cause for anxiety; in June the figure was 27%. The effect of Chernobyl was clear, although not very extensive. The real and imagined threats arising from the accident meant that in 16% of cases people's main cause for anxiety had changed.

This 16% of "new" people concerned about the dangers related to the nuclear accident had for the most part come from the group who previously stated that their main cause for anxiety was the threat of war or the international situation in general. In the early part of 1986, international terrorism, the US raid on Libya and the general state of tension in Europe arising from these factors meant that in April, 30% of Finnish people stated that these international factors gave them most cause for anxiety.

The relaxation of international tension left room in people's minds for new anxieties, such as those blown over from Chernobyl and dished up on television for everyone to enjoy. It is possible to conclude that certain people feel anxious about whatever particular problem is held up by the mass media as the burning issue of the moment.

As publicity about the accident began to lose its sparkle, causes for anxiety directly related to nuclear power were reduced to their pre-Chernobyl levels. There was also a distinct drop in concern about pollution of the environment. Those most concerned about their health remained at the same level as in June (7%), but that figure had not increased greatly from April.

Anxieties about nuclear power and environmental problems gave way to concern about employment and livelihood - or for some people these everyday problems became more current and made them forget less concrete threats.

Comparative figures for Sweden show that during the first half of the 1980s, around one quarter of the population felt deeply concerned about the problems associated with nuclear power. In May 1986 the proportion had risen to 35%, and in September it was still higher, at 42% (SIFO 1986, 3).

Even though the researchers in Finland and Sweden used different types of questions to assess people's anxiety, these results show that the Finns are less concerned about the problems related to nuclear power. It seems that only a fairly small proportion of the Finns were really upset by the accident at Chernobyl.

Young people react least

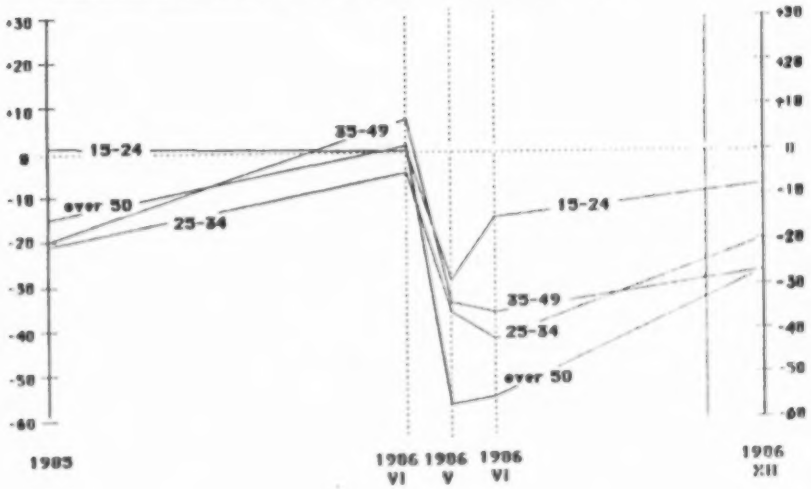
Small increases in a person's exposure to radiation constitute a health risk, but the potential effects only become evident after many years. Therefore those primarily affected by the dangers of radiation are the young, who still have many years ahead of them.

In June 1986, around six weeks after the Chernobyl accident, only 1% of 15-24 year olds stated that their main cause for anxiety was related to their health and the possibility of falling ill. The publicity surrounding the increase in radiation caused by the accident and the associated health risks caused only those who were over 50 years of age to be seriously concerned about their health - and in this group the proportion concerned about health is in any case greater than the average.

The youngest age group was also much less concerned than the others about the environmental effects of radiation and nuclear power in general. Anxiety about the environment showed the greatest increase in the 25-34 years age group.

The youngest age group showed the smallest swing in opinion away from nuclear power. Their reaction against the use of nuclear power was also shortest-lived: the distribution of opinions resumed its pre-Chernobyl state some time before June. By December the opinions of the youngest age group were almost back at the April level.

FIGURE 2.
The difference in percent of the amount of positive and negative attitudes towards nuclearpower according to age.



Research work during the 1980s has shown that in many capitalist countries young people are less favourably disposed towards nuclear power than others. In Sweden and the USA, for instance, support for nuclear power increases with age (Korpi 1980; Nealey-Melber-Rankin 1983). In Finland the situation is

reversed. Figure 2 shows that from May 1986 onwards young people had the most favourable opinion of nuclear power. The same is also true of 1985.

This pattern of reaction to Chernobyl - with young people reacting least and the oldest groups being most affected - contradicts the generally held view that older people are staid and conservative, while young people's reactions can be seen as a barometer that shows changes in society and the world at large.

The young people's more muted reaction is in one way or another related to cultural differentiation between age groups and different generations. The youth culture of the 1980s - or at least its most differentiated parts - is not particularly interested in the type of problems raised by Chernobyl. If a similar event had taken place during the first half of the previous decade, young people would no doubt have reacted much more strongly.

The effect of education

Cultural differences also account largely for the differences in the attitudes of various educational groups to nuclear power and their reactions to Chernobyl and the publicity that surrounded the accident.

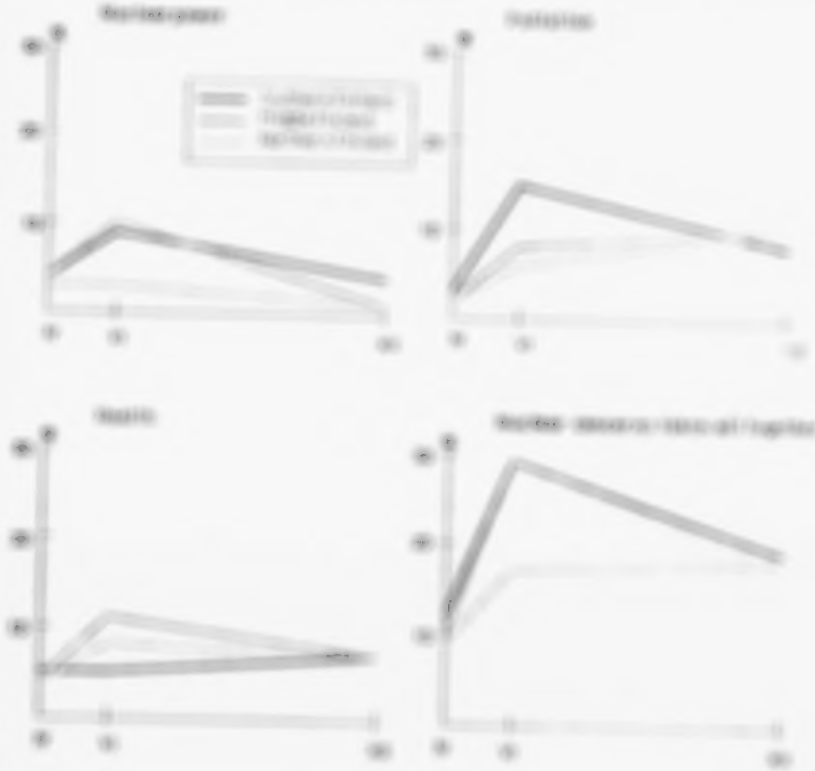
Of those who have entered working life after receiving only the basic minimum of schooling, a greater proportion tend to do work with clearly defined health risks. Therefore the proportion anxious about their health is greater than the average.

Work-related health risks cannot account for the fact that Chernobyl increased the proportion of people concerned about their health only in the least educated group. All the educational groups were exposed to the same slight increase in radiation - or, in fact, a greater proportion of more educated people were exposed, because radiation levels were higher in the southern part of the country where people tend to be better educated.

The differences in anxiety trends are probably mainly due to

Figure 3

The activity of Aurl1 was analyzed [illegible]

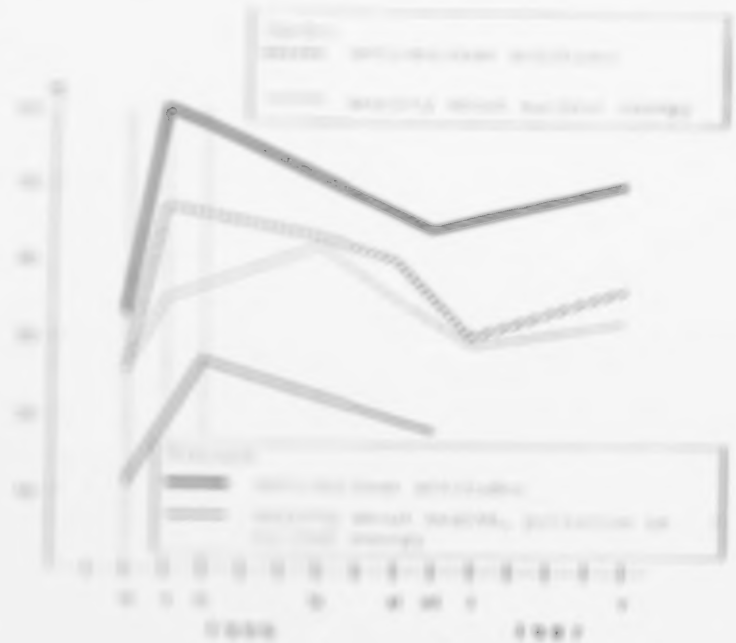


In northern Portugal, which was not affected by the [illegible] frosts, there was significantly less activity after the consignment of Thermofly[1] traps in the other parts of the country. However, [illegible] after control given as a routine decree of energy showed a more pronounced negative swing than in the north.

Thermofly[1] : New Year Update

One year after the Thermofly method proved so spectacularly successful in Tropical pastry [illegible] an [illegible] Annonday to [illegible] was introduced in May 1987, it would seem that [illegible] [illegible] have [illegible] proof having the first part of the year, while the graph of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

The percentage figures for [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]



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S.B. Ponomarev

MASS INFORMATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

The relationship between mass media and public opinion is primarily through the exchange of information. An exchange of mass information is the main way this relationship is realized. Like Soviet B.A. we define mass information as information operated at any stage of its existence by masses of people belonging to various social and occupational, demographic and other groups (i.e. to such communities which are not circumscribed by professional or formal competence).

The analysis of the relationship between mass media and public opinion, i.e. the function of mass media in relation to public opinion, is based on the fact that the mass information system is a unique channel of reciprocal links between authorities and masses, between social and territorial groups within large communities. The perfection of political relations within society and further democratization are the key to the improvement of masses in an information exchange.

Information is an integral part of administration. Any administration subject needs information channels. The function of self-administration subjects (the aim is to submit this to some the active people of our society) requires the maximum use of channels for an information exchange - within the own system and with other administration bodies and above all with the state bodies.

The development of self-administration is fast coinciding with the development of various functions of the public opinion. However, the relationship between public opinion and administration bodies does not cover all functions of public opinion (including educational, control, informational, evaluating, analytical, construction, and regulation functions). These functions are yet unable to defining the role of public opinion in society. Therefore they must be given careful consideration in studying the relationship between mass media and public opinion.

The development of public opinion functions in society is

accompanied by the development of related mass media functions. As a product of the activity of mass communicators, public opinion requires overall informational and representational provision by mass media.

The study of mass media functions in relation to public opinion is vital for present social life. Function modelling helps us draw up criteria and indices for evaluating mass media activities. We shall here mention qualities reflecting the participation of masses in an information exchange, the completeness and the cognitive character of such a participation, its informational background.

What are the basic public opinion related functions of mass media indicating a mass participation in edification?

The basic function is informing. This includes a number of aspects decisive for evaluation and measurement. Firstly, if mass informing means about a problem, i.e. the activities aimed at stimulating a cognitive potential of public opinion, developing the ability of a public opinion subject to orient itself in the essence and meaning of the phenomena discussed. Raising the informational level of the subject of public opinion is an important means of settling contradictions in edification, between democracy and professionalism, for instance.

The second aspect of informing implies a regular and complete mutual notification by the participants of the information exchange on their stands and views on a problem under consideration.

For a subject of professional edification the knowledge of existing views among non-professionals and the public in socialist society is not only a means of "knowing" reactions and grasping mass moods, but, first of all, a means of acquiring information necessary to be considered in decision-making. The subject of public opinion should be informed about the views and the intentions of specialists and competent officials to explain their own positions, to implement control functions and to influence decision-making on due time.

Third, it is important to evaluate the completeness of information submitted to public opinion according to information types. The masses do not need rationing based on sporadic facts but complete knowledge of both current events and laws and regularities, trends and statistical data on social life. As we know, the mosaic character of the present information flow results in a mosaic consciousness. An ungrounded evaluation of phenomena leads to a stereotype of mass consciousness. It is impossible to build up a whole picture of phenomena without different types of mass information: from descriptive and factual to fundamental ones.

To ensure participation in decision-making (not only for a future consensus between state administration and public opinion) it is necessary permanently to ensure the people an opportunity for an information exchange through mass media, to accumulate information, to proceed from superficial facts to exposing contradictions underlying the situation under consideration, to discussing the ways and means to solve them, to predicting the consequences of the decisions taken.

Thus, if we want to rely on a conscientious and convinced attitude of people, their active participation in the making and implementing of decisions, we should discuss not only the universal and operative character of information. Of no less importance are the validity and reliability of information, as well as its adequacy to the process of administration and self-administration. In the latter case we are dealing with the timeliness of information, i.e. the necessity to appear in due time: before taking decisions (and not only to witness measures already taken).

To ensure these aspects of information we must stick to the general political principle of openness, of availability of information **about everything for everybody.**

The integrated nature of public opinion implies that mass media are to fulfil a number of functions to bring a variety of individual and collective opinions to a summarized form. These functions can be defined as **accumulation** of public opinion. This is achieved primarily by the supplementary function of

focusing. In order to expose (and finally to express) public opinion as a whole it is necessary to focus people's attention and information exchange on a certain problem. Here we should be aware of the danger of propaganda manipulation with people's attention. It stands to reason that public opinion comes into being in connection with problems that are of interest to people. However, the interest has both objective and subjective aspects, and for different purposes the latter can be influenced successfully..

The growing role of the masses in social processes makes it necessary for party and state bodies, public organizations and mass media themselves to play an active role in stimulating the information exchange, in focusing public consciousness on really urgent problems.

The focusing function of mass media consists of ensuring the **unity of the subject, place and time of information exchange,** i.e. arranging the procedure of **public discussion.** Drafts of party documents, social programmes and bills are discussed in the USSR on a grand scale. In such cases the number of people involved totals to dozens of millions.

Public opinion cannot be formed or consolidated unless existing points of view are exposed in all their variety, unless they are collected, summed up and correlated, analysed and established in a single centre. It is natural that in large communities the responsibility besides other organizations lies on mass media. The experience of correspondence with working people and organizing public discussion in the USSR shows that nowadays mass media are the major channels of information exchange between public opinion and administrative bodies.

The focusing function also applies to dealing with the flow of information received from the public (letters and addresses), which requires summarizing and selection of relevant statements. The most efficient way to focus public opinion on a problem is to arrange a public discussion; in particular polls and enquiries are effective for this purpose.

The information received from the public can be divided into **spontaneous and organized,** depending the source of

initiative (readers, listeners, TV viewers, editorial boards or administrative bodies). As far as the former kind of information is concerned, the task of an editorial board is to accumulate the opinions expressed (i.e. to select the relevant points of view). As for the latter type, the task is to expose opinions with a view to future accumulation. Here a supplementary function of stimulating public opinion expression is also realized. We should also consider the way mass media themselves activate public opinion expression: what are the forms of addressing an audience, explaining the purposes and tasks of public discussion and the importance of public opinion. Of vital importance is not only the demonstration of mass media interest in public opinion but the actual political situation guaranteeing the effectiveness of public opinion and the related work of the mass media.

The figures indicating the spontaneous expression of public opinion are going up. The mass media in the USSR receive a total of 100 million letters a year. The rates are growing significantly thanks to "live-in" telephone connections which are becoming very popular with TV and radio programmes and with newspapers. As a whole a "direct connection" between editorial boards and the public is extending, while public cooperation with editorial boards has traditionally developed at the expense of workers' rural, military and pioneer correspondents, i.e. corporate representatives of social groups. As we know, the essence of socialist democracy, according to Lenin, lies in mass participation in administration, in ensuring every citizen equal opportunities for such participation. These principles of direct administration are prevailing in the mass media system today.

Despite the access to public opinion expression provided by mass media channels (concrete sociological studies show that mass media are generally believed to express confidence and to ensure the efficiency of public opinion) the subject of spontaneously expressed public opinion does not coincide with the population structure; consequently, there may be fluctuation in the contents of letters and addresses with regard to statements, symbols of appraisal, etc. The exposure and summary

of public opinion in polls in conformity with the representativeness and techniques of statistical analysis make it possible to distinguish the dominant opinion, only this can guarantee adequate and effective public opinion formation and expression. For this reason Soviet mass media are currently adopting more scientific polling procedures. Nevertheless, from a societal point of view the present state of such studies is far from satisfactory.

The full exposure of public opinion is one of the major conditions of its full expression. A public opinion that is not expressed cannot be properly consolidated and cannot reach maturity. The expression of public opinion through mass media channels involves its simultaneous formation. In this respect the responsibility of mass media is especially great, and manipulatory effects may reach their maximum. The principle of openness proclaimed as the basic principle in the political life of Soviet society presupposes maximum and full exposure and expression of public opinion (of course within the constitutional limits according to which mass media cannot disseminate propaganda of war, violence, racism, etc., nor act to the detriment of the interests of society).

Moreover, mass media also play an active part in the exchange of views championing positions they believe to correspond to the interests of society. Sociological studies show that the public expects editorial boards to voice out their own position, to express their views on a problem under discussion and to stand behind their principles.

Naturally, the effectiveness of public opinion expression greatly depends on the activities of mass media in informing and accumulating public opinion. Studies prove that the public is oriented to various forms of public opinion expression, both individual and summarized (a rise in the level of education seems to favour the summarized forms).

The publication of a striking individual letter may produce a significant psychological impact. However, the constructive and broad participation of the masses in administration requires a thoroughly exposed, analysed and summarized public opinion.

Nowadays the problems of scientific, political and legislative substantiation of summarized public opinion expression, the perfection of its "technological" exposures, are turning very acute.

The most important mechanism working between mass media and public opinion is based on the fact that a proclaimed opinion (i.e. an opinion established in mass media) inevitably influences the future public opinion. The point is not only to reflect public opinion properly but, realizing the whole range of mass media functions in relation to public opinion, to ensure the maturity of public opinion, its transformation from expressive and evaluational to analytic and constructive. It is evident that if the subject of public opinion is to play a consultative and decisive role and not only an expressive one, there should be growing requirements to the essence of public opinion, i.e. the level of competence (within the limitations of non-professionals), its analytic, argumentative and constructive nature. Thus the expression and proclamation of public opinion through mass media channels should be evaluated as part of much broader information activities using a whole set of characteristics and indices, as it was already stated above.

The constructiveness of public opinion based on the actual experience of the masses and on a high level of informational knowledge are the major prerequisites for ensuring the efficiency of public opinion. So the procedures of organized exposure of public opinion (as well as its future proclamation) should take into consideration the "higher" functions of public opinion in social administration. In fact, a traditional "questionnaire-omnibus" with its numerous topics aimed at getting an answer "from the tip of the tongue" does not work in cases of an equal dialogue between mass media, administrative bodies and public opinion. It should be stressed here that there is a change in the accounting of mass media before public opinion. They do not only proclaim public opinion but also account before it for their working methods, plans of submitting information to administrative bodies, etc., in other words, they place themselves under the control of the public. But at the

same time they get support from public opinion by **submitting** public opinion to administrative bodies and by ensuring its efficiency (for example, in decision-making). The supplementary function of disseminating information must be studied separately. There is substantial need for elaborating the norms and forms of informing administrative bodies of public opinion on specific problems. This function does not coincide with the function of expression (proclamation) as it implies additional measures by mass media representing public opinion to control the passage of information on public opinion within administrative bodies and to prepare additional documents.

At present the regulation covers best the relations between mass media and administrative bodies with regard to individual letters and addresses. A comprehensive regulation of work on summarized public opinion is on the agenda. With the development of social democracy in the process of fulfilling Lenin's demand to make the work of authorities public we are facing a greater need to inform people regularly about the passage of information from the subject of public opinion to administrative bodies.

Together with their public the mass media carry out the function of **control over the realization of administration** decisions. It is rather typical of Soviet mass media to make editorial boards ask people to supervise the situation at a local level, to take part in the collection of information.

The overall participation of people in administration also implies that mass media should perform the function of **preserving public opinion.** To some extent, this function is realized in the process of exposure and accumulation of public opinion. But there is a need to preserve public opinion not only for a short time but over a longer period as well - the so-called "treasure chest of people's experience". It is possible that a social problem on which public opinion is focused cannot be solved immediately but the solution will be found later. Many social problems reappear at a new stage of social development. The solutions of certain current problems may need revision tomorrow. In all such cases it is useful to turn to something solved already. But how should public opinion

be preserved? Obviously not in the original form. But a summarized form may be of little use as well because its analytical and constructive value may be lost in the reduction. To answer this question scientific and practical studies are needed. The latest information systems can be used succesfully only on the proper scientific and political basis. A theoretical model to cover the functions of mass media in relation to public opinion should not be linear, because the functions are not merely different stages of the same work.

Notes

[1] See: Public opinion. M., 1980, pp. 37-40. See also the works by Grushin, B.A., Uledov A.K.

Pentti Raittila

IMAGES OF THE SOVIET UNION AMONG FINNISH YOUTH

Preliminary results of a study among 16-18 year-old schoolchildren

In a study of Finnish people's opinions and conceptions about the Soviet Union, it is important to take into consideration the historical development of the two countries' relations as well as the special features of Finland's current foreign policy line. When we are studying the conceptions of young Finnish people, we must examine these against the background of Finnish adolescents' life situation and world-view.

In the course of history there have been many dramatic changes in the relations of Finnish people to Russia, to the Russian people, and to the Soviet Union; this is particularly true of the present century. The national awakening of the Finnish people took place in the 19th century when the country was part of the Russian empire, and at that time the relationships with the mother country and with the Russian people were fairly good, but this situation changed somewhat at the turn of the century, during the years of oppression.[1]

Finnish images changed more dramatically in 1917-18, with the working-class revolutions: the October Revolution in Russia and the victory of the White Guard in the Finnish civil war. The victors of that war started systematic work to implant a new kind of image of the Russian people and of the Soviet Union in the minds of the Finnish people. In fact the whole national identity of the young Finnish nation was essentially built upon anti-bolshevism. A myth was created which presented the two countries as archenemies. Finland's role was to protect Western civilization against the "barbarian Russians", who were described not only as aggressive, slavish and uncivilized, but also as being of an inferior race.[2]

Twenty years of prejudices and enemy images, then five years of war and war propaganda against the Soviet Union - this was the vantage point from which Finland began to reorientate itself towards a new foreign policy line in 1944.

The official image of the Soviet Union changed very quickly:

open animosity gave way to a language of friendship, but in many cases this was merely a rather superficial liturgy of foreign politics. In the minds of the ordinary people, at the level of civil society, no rapid changes of this magnitude could be observed. The myths and stereotypes belonging to the 'image of the enemy' were still alive and well in the everyday consciousness of the people; the hatred towards the Russians had been stirred up mainly through trivial entertainment and jokes. A dualism evolved between the official "language of friendship" and the language of civil society - a dualism which, although not as blatant as in the 40s, is still characteristic of the attitudes of Finns towards the Soviet Union and towards the Russians. Political speeches of friendship are sometimes rather far apart from the comments of Finns who have visited the Soviet Union.[3]

The dualism of language discussed above not only shows how slowly attitudes change but it also demonstrates the contradiction our new foreign policy means to the ruling class of our country and the parties representing it. The hostile image of Russia championed during 1918-44 was well in agreement with the ideological objectives of the parties who won the civil war. The new foreign policy started as a compulsory friendship, submission to the inevitable realities. It was also in partial disagreement with the anti-socialism that was part of the ideology of the bourgeois parties. The result was a contradiction between foreign and domestic policies, and the tensions created by this contradiction have affected political life in Finland throughout the post-war period.

Nevertheless, the attitudes of Finns towards the Soviet Union and Russians have undergone a significant change during the past four decades. Even those people who have strictly negative attitudes towards the Soviet social system do support the good relations between our countries. But how completely the old negative image of Russian and of the Soviet Union has vanished? Would there still be some elements of it in the consciousness of Finnish people - the younger generation included? And what would be the significance of the massive anti-Soviet campaigns of

western mass media (e.g. the "campaign on human rights", the Korean plane shot down in 1983), or the blatantly anti-Soviet products of western mass culture (Rambo and Rocky films). These are questions I had in mind one year ago when I started research into the images of Soviet Union young Finnish people have.

The young subjects of the study were born during 1968-70, so they had lived their whole life after the relations between Finland and the Soviet Union had been stabilized. They have taken the 1948 Treaty of Cooperation, Friendship and Mutual Assistance for granted, and thus they had not personally experienced the change in attitudes from hostility to friendship.

The Finnish youth today are living in an era where the gap between generations is broader than ever before. Home and school have lost their central significance in the socialization process while (western) transnational youth culture and peers have taken over their role in moulding the world views of young people. While adults still give priority to work, the youth are more concentrated on consumption and leisure. The youth born after 1968 belong to a generation who regard television, rock music, movies, youth magazines and, in the 1980s, VCRs just as essential ingredients of life as bread and butter. It is the youth who are mass consumers of many products of the cultural industry. Their life style and consumption model also includes fashionable garments, discos, cafes and fashionable hobbies.[4]

Many studies concerning the world views of young people have noted their lack of perspective and gloomy future prospects. On the other hand the researchers have also noted their modest knowledge of history, their attachment to the present. The youth have surprisingly vague ideas even of the history of the society they live in and the operational mechanisms underlying it.[5]

The young subjects of this study thus represent a generation characterized by an ignorance of the events that have made history and the regularities of historical development, who are rather uncertain and pessimistic about the future but still live in the "realm of freedom", in the world of frantic consumption

and rapidly changing ideals.

In the following we shall discuss some of the conceptions these people have of the Soviet Union. The results are drawn from an enquiry made a year ago to young people living in Tampere (N=174), from complementary personal interviews and on the enquiries made in three other towns this year in April (N=671, the towns are Helsinki, Lappeenranta and Kurikka). The subjects were either high school or vocational school students and 16-18 years of age. Over one fifth of the youth had visited the Soviet Union at least once.

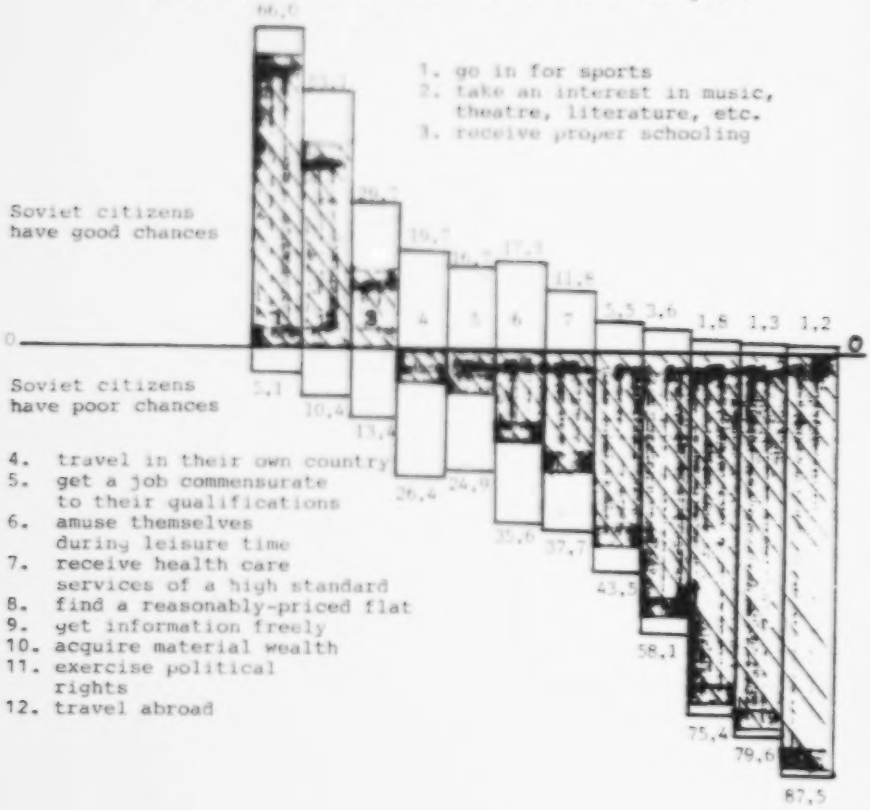
Both enquiries showed that the youth had more attitudes towards the Soviet Union than actual knowledge. Their knowledge was rather casual and sporadic, and they seemed to know very little about the history and the functioning of the economic and social systems of the Soviet Union. The following examples of the results illustrate the knowledge 16-17 year old students had:

- less than one fifth knew the year of the October Revolution with a tolerance of one year (1916-18).
- one third knew roughly the number of inhabitants in the Soviet Union (about 300 millions), and three thirds were able to mention at least three large cities in the Soviet Union.
- Two thirds of the youth knew that there is only one political party in the Soviet Union, but only 14.3 percent believed that parliamentary elections are held in the Soviet Union. Over one third believed they are not held and almost one half answered: "I don't know".
- One third thought that unemployment rates in the Soviet Union are at least 5 percent of the total labour. Over one third said they did not know. 12.2 percent thought that there is no unemployment in the Soviet Union.

Table 1. Identification of prominent figures of Soviet Union

	(N=671)
Alla Pugachova	87.0
Vladimir Lenin	81.5
Konstantin Chernenko	76.2
Sergei Bubka	65.1
Andrei Gromyko	59.9
Vladislav Tretjak	58.9
Garri Kasparov	45.0
Tsingis Aitmatov	18.0
Ilja Glazunov	15.2
Dimitri Shostakovich	14.9
Mikhail Sholohov	11.3

Figure 1. Opinions of Finnish students about the chances of Soviet citizens to do various things ("Would you say that people living in the Soviet Union have good, average, or poor chances to ..."). The area of each vertical bar above the horizontal axis describes the proportion of respondents who believed that the chances are good; the area below the axis describes the proportion of those who said chances are poor.



4. travel in their own country
5. get a job commensurate to their qualifications
6. amuse themselves during leisure time
7. receive health care services of a high standard
8. find a reasonably-priced flat
9. get information freely
10. acquire material wealth
11. exercise political rights
12. travel abroad

- The majority of the youth thought that Soviet citizens have particularly poor chances to travel abroad, to enjoy political rights and freedoms, to acquire material wealth and get diversified information. By contrast the youth generally believed Soviet citizens to have good chances to go in for sports and take an interest in various forms of culture (see Figure 1).
- The most frequently mentioned current problems is Soviet Union were constantly rising prices of foodstuffs (45.2% of respondents mentioned it), alcoholism (44.3%) and difficulties in finding a job corresponding to one's education (36.8%). Ordinary Soviet citizens were thought to spend most money for food and dwelling.
- In identifying Soviet citizens of the 20th century, the respondents knew best Alla Pugachova. Soviet politicians and sportsmen were also relatively well known, but writers and artists, who have appeared frequently in Finnish mass media, were almost unknown (see Table 1).

As a whole the youth tended to see the Soviet Union as a grey and disciplined society whose citizens have limited freedom and political rights.

The question of the positive and negative aspects of the Soviet Union revealed that the youth knew the negative aspects better than positive and had better social grounds for their negative opinions than for the positive ones. Over 30 percent of the respondents were not able or willing to say anything positive about the Soviet Union, and over one fourth only gave some superficial and irrelevant facts (good vodka, the hockey team, tourist attractions). Only one third could list some important positive aspects in Soviet society.

The list of negative aspects was topped by the lack of civil rights and some features of the everyday life related to the economic and social system, living standards and quality of goods. Very few respondents (4.5%) mentioned spontaneously any negative aspects in the Soviet foreign policy.

When the respondents were separately asked about the foreign policy and role of Soviet Union in the world, the answers were

divided as follows:

- the SU is primarily a peace-loving state 32.5%
- the SU is primarily an aggressive state 14.6%
- the SU is actually neither of these alternatives 52.8%

The answers belonging to the last category generally indicated that the respondents paralleled the Soviet Union and the USA as similar superpowers primarily concerned with defending their own interests. Part of the respondents who thought the Soviet Union to threaten the security of Finland yet saw it as an object of attack and not as an expansive conqueror (this idea is based on the model: if for instance the Soviet Union were attacked through Finland, the Red Army might occupy our country).

The paralleled superpower policies of the Soviet Union and the USA notwithstanding, many respondents felt that the Soviet Union has lately turned more peace-loving and in this connection their highly positive attitudes towards the Soviet leader Gorbachev became evident. When the youth living in Tampere were over a year ago asked whom they believed to be more peace-loving, Gorbachev or Reagan, an impressive 73.1 percent said it was Gorbachev. Only 3.5 percent said Reagan was more peace-loving. In the enquiry held this spring the students were asked: "What do you think of the present leader of Soviet Union, Gorbachev?" Over two thirds showed a positive attitude towards Gorbachev, and less than five percent gave negative comments. The contents of the positive comments was rather variegated: most respondents only said he is a terrific bloke and more sensible than the former Soviet leaders. He was also often stated to be a peace-loving and innovative leader who has given the Soviet people more freedom. There were also a great number of respondents who believed in Gorbachev as a leader whose aim is to westernize the Soviet Union.

When the youth were asked about the origin of their knowledge of Soviet Union, number one in the list was television (84.9%) followed by newspapers (78.4%) and friends and relatives (48.6%). When asked about the source that had influenced their attitudes most, the respondents listed mass media (71.5%), home

and relatives (37.7) and friends and mates (34.4%). Two thirds wanted more information about the Soviet Union, and the topics of most interests were the life of Soviet youth (47%), and the work and everyday life of Soviet citizens in general (34.3%) and their leisure activities (30%).

Summarizing these preliminary results we can note that the youth seem to have rather superficial knowledge of the Soviet Union and a prejudiced and negative attitude toward the neighbouring country. However, the negative attitudes are not comprehensive but clearly differentiated to some fields; this was particularly evident of the positive attitudes to Soviet foreign policy and Mr. Gorbachev. In this respect the image Finnish youth have of Soviet Union has changed considerably since the first two and half decades of Finnish independence or the image contemporary Europeans have.

As a research method the questionnaire gives an overall picture of the knowledge and attitudes of the youth and of the differences between the sexes and different lines of education, but it does not allow a very accurate analysis of the background features underlying the images. On the basis of the results only it is rather difficult to decipher whether the negative attitudes of some respondents (in particular boys attending the vocational school) is an expression of the traditional Finnish hatred towards Russians or an outcome of some rather similar elements in certain products of the western youth culture or merely a reflection of general negative feelings towards other nations. As far as I understand, qualitative research methods (open interviews, participant observation etc.) would offer much better possibilities for exploring the origins and background of the image of Soviet Union.

However, on the basis of earlier youth studies and the present enquiries and interviews I would like to propose some ideas about the factors underlying the image Finnish youth have of the Soviet Union. The ideas are hypothetical and many of them would require further studies to allow any generalization.

First, it would seem that the enemy image that was dominant before 1944 has more or less disappeared from the

consciousness of contemporary youth. The youth no longer perceives the Soviet Union as an archenemy, and the thinking that Russians would belong to an inferior race has vanished almost completely. The old mythical and remote image of the Soviet Union has given way to a more realistic and nuanced image, but it still remains on the level of superficial observations and everyday experience. Political attitudes together with the emphasis of irrelevant aspects dictate the basic attitudes where the Soviet Union appears as a strange and somewhat negative society. The image young people have of the Soviet Union lacks historical foundations, but this is no wonder in view of the present time perspective characteristic of the consciousness of the youth today.

Second, the values an ideals of western youth culture have a major effect on the image young Finns have of the Soviet Union. I do not refer primarily to the overtly anti-Soviet products of western mass culture, which of course are not void of influence. I refer to the ideals and models of the youth culture that are generally perceived as positive and non-political. Youth music, magazines, movies, advertisements, fashion and the models of consumption they offer to young people represent a way of life characterized by individualism, an illusion of freedom, dynamism and a hedonistic attitude towards life. The reality of the Soviet Union is felt to be in sharp contradiction with all this; according to the youth the Soviet Union is a static, cheerless and colourless society of serious work and strict discipline. Thus the "positive" values of western youth culture in my opinion are even more effective in creating a negative image of the Soviet Union than overt political anti-Soviet propaganda.

Third, even without a special anti-Soviet propaganda the life in a capitalist society would reproduce the hegemonic ideology that has got hegemony in such society. Albeit many young Finns today show subjective alienation from politics, many of their conceptions have a political or ideological background they themselves are not aware of.

In the beginning I referred to the dualism of the language

used in speaking about the Soviet Union. In particular the everyday language plays an important role in moulding the world views of people. It stands to reason that the language of the civil society with its prejudices and anti-Soviet jokes exerts greater influence on the thinking of young people than the official "language of friendship", albeit the latter has a dominant position in publicity. The superficial "language of friendship", possibly accompanied by a polished propaganda presenting Soviet achievements without criticism, stand in such radical conflict with the everyday language and the superficial experience gained in trips to the Soviet Union that the positive images produced by mass media lose their credibility. More in-depth knowledge of current developments in the Soviet Union is lacking in both levels of language.

However, the negative images are not based solely on the lack of information. The image of the Soviet Union as a dull and cheerless place is closely related to the ideals and feelings of young Finns, the affective side of consciousness. Any efforts to change the prejudiced and negative images should take both cognitive and affective aspects of consciousness into account.

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E.I. Bashkirova

CONTENT ANALYSIS IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE STUDIES

The factors that determine how mass media reflect social reality include, on the one hand, mass media functions (such as social control and public opinion formation), publisher's goals and assignments and, on the other hand, the communicator's attitude (his preferences, interests and expertize in explicating a problem). Any production of messages entails an active interaction of these objective and subjective factors, which are always present in the flow of information.

We are here particularly interested in objective and subjective features, the degree they are represented in mass media reporting on problems of war and peace, and the expressions of the communicator's (or publisher's) own attitudes towards the social reality reflected. The most popular method for studying these characteristics is a content analysis of mass media messages.

The main advantage of content analysis lies in the fact that a researcher who has knowledge of the laws regulating the way a text reflects reality combined with the necessary analytical tools and statistical techniques can obtain valuable implicit information from each message. A formalized analysis of documents is based on a text, which can be defined as a combination of facts and commentary compiled in accordance with a certain concept or plan. This, however, implies a study of the reality behind the text. The authors of the book "How to conduct a sociological study", for example, emphasize that it is important to consider "not only events, facts, human relations reflected in the texts but the principles of the choice of information for the texts as well as the extratext reality. In other words, a researcher may take an equal interest both in the content of the text itself and the underlying reality."[1]

Thus we can distinguish at least two types of characteristics: 1) those expressing the communicator's attitude directly (appraisal - positive or negative), and 2) those expressing it indirectly. In the following we shall have a look

at some approaches to content analysis in assessing mass media contribution to the propaganda of peace and disarmament.

An international comparative content analysis of 29 popular newspapers in 19 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, India, Italy, Cuba, Mexico, Poland, Romania, the USSR, the USA, Finland, France, Switzerland, the German Federal Republic, Sweden)[2] carried out by the International Journalist Organization in 1985 picked out the following items of analysis:

1) attention given to problems of international life (length of headlines, column size, number of articles on the first page, number of articles at the top of a page, illustrated articles);
2) authors or sources of information on international life (journalists, experts, news agencies);
3) genre (news, commentaries, satire, reporting, speeches, official statements, interviews);
4) problems and topics (problems related to peace and cooperation, to international confrontations and internal conflicts);
5) acting persons and organizations (the UN, military blocks, government bodies, service men, public organizations, leaders, etc.);
6) military or anti-war activities (conferences, organizations, cultural events, hostilities);
7) arguments for war and peace (excuses, condemnation, "objectively for armament", "objectively" against war).

An interesting technique - an "indifference" scale - was used in this study to assess the attitudes of the media. The scale was based on the amount of information in each issue not pertinent to the problems of war and peace. The Finnish "Iltalehti", Swedish "Expressen" and Finnish "Helsingin Sanomat" got the highest indifference indices on the scale.

With regard to the topicality of information the analysis showed two opposite groups of newspapers: those oriented to publication of information on peace and cooperation (mostly in socialist countries) and those oriented to information on war and military conflicts. The lack of symbols of appraisal in the

analysis of information makes it difficult or even impossible to define the attitude of newspapers, magazines and sources of information to problems of war and peace. Information on space armament, for instance, may be regarded a contribution to the struggle for peace.

Another interesting approach to analyzing the content of mass media was used by the Centre for War, Peace and the News Media.[3] The readers were asked to make up news leads on armament reduction, peace movement or Soviet-US relations which they thought unlikely to appear in the mainstream of media. One of the leads, for example, said: "Today at the press conference President Reagan perplexed all correspondents by admitting that the US had made a lot of errors in their evaluation of reality during the previous years including the period of his own administration. He stated, 'Like all other governments we were obstinate and stupid and we didn't realize that the main threat for us was not Russians but a nuclear holocaust.'"

There are still other approaches that may be applied in analyzing the content of the press, but one fundamental problem should be solved first: the choice of universal analytic units which would reflect the model of reality worked out by newspapers. This is of utmost importance in view of the fact that newspapers published in different parts of the world vary in their ideological foundations, in the way of presenting information, in their size and circulation, in the object and subject of influence.

While choosing units for the international comparative study[4] "Mass media contribution to the establishment of confidence, mutual knowledge, peace, disarmament and international mutual understanding" we proceeded from the fact that one of the most significant elements for promoting peace and mutual understanding is **a climate of confidence** and **mutual knowledge** of nations. Consequently, mass media contribution consists in spreading information apt to strengthen **the atmosphere of** confidence and in supplying relevant, comprehensive and objective information on other countries and **nations.**

The aim of the study is to define **the level** and **orientation** of mass media contribution to the cause of peace and understanding among nations on the basis of certain quantitative and qualitative indicators. To attain this goal it is necessary to carry out the following tasks:

1. Determine the amount of press attention given to the problems concerned.
2. Establish the level of confidence towards various states as reflected by mass media.
3. Establish the level of spreading information about different aspects of life in foreign countries.
4. Establish the amount and orientation of attention devoted by the press to problems of disarmament.
5. Establish the amount and orientation of attention devoted by the press to international cooperation.

The object of the study was newspapers in three countries of each of the three geographical regions. The states were selected on the basis of their population rates (under 50 million, 50 to 100 million, over 100 million). The following countries were selected:

Central Europe - the USSR, France, Yugoslavia;
America, the USA, Canada, Cuba;
Southern and South-Eastern Asia - India, Vietnam, Sri Lanka.

One morning daily with the largest circulation edited in the capital of a given state was picked up for analysis. The content analysis covered a period of one week (seven days) 17-23 November 1986.

The analytic unit was a statement (a completed utterance), which is not necessarily limited to one sentence. A statement, as we see it, is an element of the text that carries an independent meaning and contains a certain category of analysis. It is necessary for the anaysis to include all publications in newspapers which touch upon international life and different aspects of life in other countries.

The categories of analysis were:

1. Mutual knowledge of states

Characteristics of statements

a) sphere of social life
- economy
- politics
- science and technology
- standards of life
- human rights and freedoms
- environment protection
- culture and education
- health, health services, sports
- crime control

b) states on which information is published
- socialist states (the USSR, other socialist states, the USSR excluded)
- capitalist states (the USA, other capitalist states, the USA excluded)
- non-aligned states

c) symbols of information appraisal
- positive
- neutral or balanced
- negative

2. Mutual confidence

Characteristics of statements

a) sphere of international cooperation
- economy
- politics
- science and technology
- environment protection
- human rights
- health, health services, sports
- culture and education
- crime control

b) states between which cooperation is developed
- socialist states
- capitalist and socialist states
- capitalist and non-aligned states
- capitalist states

c) symbols of information appraisal

- positive
- neutral or balanced
- negative

3. Struggle for peace and international security

Characteristics of statements

a) parties involved in the struggle for peace and international security

- state, government and political bodies and organizations, state and public figures
- public masses

b) spheres of struggle for international security

in the military field:

- refusal of nuclear powers from war, both nuclear and conventional, against each other or against other states
- non-proliferation of arms race into space, banning of all nuclear weapons tests and the complete eradication of nuclear weapons, banning and liquidation of chemical warfare, refusal to produce other means of mass destruction
- reduction of military potential
- curbing of military expenditure
- refusal to extend existing military blocks or set up new ones

in the political field

- respect of the right of each nation to choose its own ways and forms of development
- just political settlements of international crises and conflicts
- measures aimed at strengthening confidence among nations, at working out efficient guarantees against any invasion, inviolability of frontiers
- measures to prevent international terrorism, security of international ground, air and sea communications included

in the economic field:

- struggle against all types of discrimination, against the policy of economic blocade and sanctions, if not provided by world community recommendation
- establishment of a new world economic order which would

guarantee economic security for every state
- uniting efforts in space peaceful exploration, in solving global problems on which the fate of mankind is dependent;

in the humanitarian field:
- cooperation in spreading ideas of peace, disarmament, international security; raising the level of general objective information, acquaintance of nations with each other, strengthening the spirit of mutual understanding and agreement in interrelations
- struggle against genocide, apartheid, fascism propaganda, and any other racial, national or religious superiority as well as against discrimination of people on such a basis,
- broadening international cooperation in ensuring political, social and individual human rights
- solving the problems of reunification of families, marriage contractions, developing contacts among people and organizations
- strengthening and searching for new ways of cooperation in the sphere of culture, science, education and medicine

c) countries fighting for peace and international security
- socialist
- capitalist
- non-alighned

d) symbol of appraisal
- positive
- neutral or balanced
- negative

A quantitative analysis of all topics and other characteristics can be used to reveal the communicator's attitude and the publisher's strategies underlying it, in fact, to measure the actual contribution of the newspapers under study to the cause of peace and mutual understanding.

V.D. Voinova

MASS MEDIA: FUNCTION OF PUBLIC OPINION EXPRESSION

Soviet mass media are taking an active part in the revolutionary process of reforming all spheres of life in our society. The Political report of the CPSU Central Committee at the XXVII party Congress stressed that at present "editorial boards have shown courage in tackling numerous new and complicated tasks. On the pages of newspapers and magazines, in TV programmes, life itself has appeared with all its achievements and contradictions; one can find more analysis and sense of civic duty, a more acute way of posing questions and more concrete criticism of shortcomings and neglect. A great number of constructive propositions has been submitted on pressing economic, social and ideological problems."[1]

In the course of developing democracy and openness mass media are very active in helping the party to take counsel with people in a general and frank manner. Today the basic task of all workers of the press, radio and TV is to help people understand and assimilate the ideas of acceleration, to stimulate masses to struggle for the successful realization of the XXVII CPSU Congress resolutions.

By focusing attention on the development of openness, criticism and self-criticism on the pages of newspapers and magazines, in radio and TV programmes, the party at the same time points out the main ways of achieving higher efficiency of mass media publications. At a meeting with mass media and propaganda heads in March 1986, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev emphasized: "It is necessary that working people themselves should speak their own language on the pages of the press, in radio and TV programmes about all new things that are becoming part of our reality, about their concerns and aspirations."[2]

The policy adopted by the party to accelerate socio-economic development of Soviet society is based on altering the relationship between mass media and public opinion significantly; the changes affect not only opinion formation but

a range and variety of opinion expression as well, and especially the effectiveness of expression. "The core of this process is extending openness in our society. Because of their inner nature the press and mass media are a mighty tool of openness. It is mass media that draws public attention to facts and events, and reveals public attitude to the problems concerned.[3]

The interaction between mass media and public opinion is of a deep dialectic nature, for mass media themselves are the product of public opinion and in turn shape public opinion. The functioning of mass media is based on the active participation of practically all major population strata in the production of information. According to Lenin's precepts it is a historical tradition of Soviet mass media to get support from collective experience and social activity of working people.

Under present circumstances there is also a need for more efficient propaganda and better use of public opinion. It is time for collectives or our whole democratic system to undertake the great tasks set by the party which journalists are facing now, as V.G. Afanasiev, Chairman of the Board, emphasized in his summary report to the VI Congress of the USSR Union of Journalists.[4]

The function of public opinion expression plays a key role Soviet mass media. This function is particularly useful in attaining the following goals.

1) implementing democratic principles of socialist society, strengthening and developing its democratic foundations, ensuring extensive mass participation in social management;
2) informing population of public opinion on urgent problems;
3) influencing social institutes in decision-making;
4) shaping public opinion, stimulating and changing it;
5) forming convictions, outlooks, mass consciousness;
6) regulating behaviour of society members, encouraging their social activity;

The methods of expressing public opinion through mass media channels used for this purpose include:

1) direct (mirror) expression - publication of readers' letters;

speeches by representatives of population in newspapers, TV and radio programmes without editorial comments, publications of out-of-staff authors without any editorial corrections which could alter the content, idea or tone of the publication;
2) transformation - in articles or speeches by journalists in cooperation with representatives of certain population groups, collectives and organizations or written on behalf of certain groups; in articles or speeches by population representatives which are commented by editorial boards or some journalists;
3) accumulation and expression - in articles or speeches by journalists made on the basis of a thorough and comprehensive study of various opinions and points of view underlying the opinions.

There is every objective prerequisite in Soviet society for mass media to implement the function of public opinion expression. They are guaranteed by the position of mass media in the social structure of our society, by the functional purposes of this institution, by the commitment of authorities in social administration to public opinion, by the authorization of newspapers to take independent decisions and of broadcasting stations to solve their editorial problems by themselves (the character of this relationship is: editorial board - publisher), by publishers' orientation to the function of mass media, by the existing opportunities and channels for public opinion expression and the extensive possibilities for the study of public opinion, etc.

Besides there are also subjective factors which should be taken into account while considering the question of how optimally the function of public opinion expression is realized in mass media. These factors include:

- to what extent the editorial boards and journalists have realized the importance of this function;
- their attitude to the role of public opinion in social life;
- their preparedness for activities of this kind;
- competence;
- initiative;
- the number of channels for public opinion study, etc.

Thus, it is important for journalists not only to reveal the essence of the radical changes currently taking place in society but to reconstruct the work of their collectives in conformity with the requirements of life, to make the press, radio and TV collective organizers of the restructuring process in all spheres of life, a tribune for public opinion expression.

In this respect it is essential to improve the feedback mechanism between mass media and the public. In fact, Soviet press, radio and TV apply all possible means of such a liaison - readers' conferences, public editorial boards, out-of-staff departments, consultative councils, analysis of editorial correspondence, etc. We shall here discuss in more detail the manifold activies of editorial boards in connection with employing out-of-staff authors.[5]

As channels of public opinion expression mass media have a number of special features. One is the presence of a certain intermediary (language editor) in the process of information passing from out-of-staff authors to the public.

On the other hand, the press, radio and TV can be regarded as a kind of tribune given to representatives of broad masses of population. Publications by out-of-staff authors in mass media are becoming more important due to the immense audiences as well as to authority, operativeness, and efficiency of the channels of information. Any published statements of non-professionals, public or private, is an expression of public opinion and has a great social impact, because it is thought to coincide with the stand of the editorial board - the public in a way regards the author and the editorial board as one.

Representatives of all population strata can be potential authors for mass media. In practice, however, there are some limitations: the orientation of the editorial board to publishing out-of-staff authors, the number and capacity of information channels, and people's activity. There is also one more aspect to the problem. Very often editorial boards ask representatives of various population groups to submit writings on a specific topic. For this reason we find it essential to divide the out-of-staff authors into two groups: those who

contribute to mass media on their own initiative and those who do so at the request editorial boards. In this way we can distinguish two flows of public opinion: a spontaneous flow mainly in the form of letters, responses published after a careful selection, and a provoked flow of writings sent in on the request of editorial boards on specific topics. The provoked opinion may not always coincide with actual public opinion on certain problems, if editorial boards fail to study public opinion on urgent problems carefully and rapidly enough, if they do not know the circumstances of its functioning, the demands and needs of the population. The main task of mass media in regard to public opinion is to highlight socially loaded problems which are on the focus of public attention and present the views of representatives of broad masses of population.

There are three general groups of out-of-staff authors in mass media: professional journalists working in some other media unit (including factory newspapers); permanent public correspondents of an editorial board (who supplement the staff and are in fact semi-professionals in journalism; and people who are not professional journalists, but, for example, specialists in fields of social life other than journalism, people asked by editorial boards to supply information.

It stands to reason that in order to realize the principle of mass character in the most effective way it is necessary for mass media to involve as many representatives of all population strata as possible, including rural and urban correspondents, ordinary working people from enterprises and offices throughout the country. However, sociological studies carried out by the Institute for Sociological Research of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Department of Journalism, of Moscow State University and by other sociological centres show that in choosing out-of-staff authors city and town newspapers tend to favour people who are directly involved in administration, politics, ideology, in the activities of the oral propaganda system or in factory newspapers. This is only natural because representatives of these groups are well informed about various problems of life in their city or town and have some experience of contributing

to newspapers.[6]

Nevertheless, one can hardly think it proper when, say, the share of out-of-staff authors of worker origin in a city newspaper is negligible, especially in an industrial city with workers consisting half of its population.

Editorial boards generally apply the three following ways to editing texts and writings of out-of-staff authors for publication or broadcasting:

1) publication/broadcasting of texts without corrections;
2) professional journalists editing and styling texts
3) preparation of texts for future publication in cooperation with an author or writing them down from an oral interview with the author.

With regard to improving the work of editorial boards in preparing texts by out-of-staff authors we should remember that there are people who cannot present their ideas in a reasonable, competent and entertaining way, but most people are perfectly able to put forth their views in an individual manner, in details meant for highlighting certain aspects of the problems discussed in conformity with the requirments of the editorial board. Unfortunately editorial boards often fail to take advantage of this feature because of the additional effort involved. Instead, many editorial boards employ persons who are not competent as correspondents and produce trite and monotonous publications or programmes. This results in lower quality of journalism and inadequate knowledge of opinions of different groups of population.

Mass media workers admit that suppressing individual styles and forms makes publications look impersonal and produces a lack of originality. It is not always possible for a future author to pop up in the middle of a discussion with a deep insight into the problem, to analyse the causes of a negative phenomenon, to formulate concrete and practical recommendations for a solution to the problem.

Out-of-staff authors are direct representatives of broad masses of people to whom all newspaper, radio and TV information is addressed, so they not only express public opinion through

mass media but resorting to their own experience they shape an image of a particular media unit towards truthfulness, reliability, and factual grounds of publications or programmes.

Considering the actual state of work with out-of-staff authors and preparation of their writings for publication gives us a chance to assess the perfection of these activities on several dimensions.

First, we have to solve a number of complex problems concerning the study of public opinion by scientific methods such as the content analysis of mail received, personal talks and contact of editorial board members with representatives of various population groups, sociological polls of audience on acute problems, etc. An extensive use of scientific methods for studying public opinion will allow journalists to reach more adequate evaluations of certain questions believed to be urgent and to highlight them on the pages of their newspapers. If there are some objective reasons for which such questions cannot be settled, they should be explained to the population. Besides, a true picture of the state of public opinion makes it possible to select relevant writings for publication, to charge people to write on really important problems, etc.

Second, the existing disproportions in the social structure of out-of-staff authors, in the character and content of writings, make it necessary to conduct a systematic study of the activities of editorial boards themselves. This is the only way to weed out spontaneous elements and ensure a purposeful and planned expression of public opinion, to build up a network of out-of-staff authors with due consideration given to their social structure and professional involvement in certain fields of the national economy, and the range of their interests. If necessary, editorial boards will also be able to change the content of newspaper columns or programmes, for example, to increase the amount of critical publications devoted to a specific sphere of social life, etc.

Third, there is the problem of improving the preparation of writings for publication or broadcasting, of using different forms of individual work with authors in order to raise the

quality of their writings, to make them more concrete, convincing, substantiated, acute, etc. It is also necessary to eliminate (or minimize) the practice of excluding non-professionals from the preparation of publications, to carry out systematic and planned work to teach the fundamentals of journalism to permanent out-of-staff authors, etc.

By these means it should be possible to bring considerable improvements in the activities of mass media in public opinion expression. As a result, out-of-staff authors could find greater satisfaction in their cooperation with editorial boards, which would add up to better contacts between mass media and non-professional authors, a growth in the numbers of people seeking to take part in those activities.

Thus a further perfection of the feedback mechanism between editorial boards and audiences will give us more mature public opinion by ensuring its full expression.

Notes

1. The documents of the XXVII CPSU Congress. M. 1986, p.69.
2. "Communist", 1986, No 6, p.3.
3. The press and public opinion. M. 1986, p. 191.
4. To feel the pulse of restructuring. The VI Congress of the USSR Union of Journalists. - "Pravda", 1987, March 11.
5. Out-of-staff authors write for the press, radio or TV but do not belong to the staff or corresponding editorial boards.
6. Mass information in a Soviet industrial city. M., 1987, pp. 390-391.

A.N. Vlasova

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION IN PUBLIC OPINION FORMATION

A cornerstone of public opinion formation is the principle of informing.

Since the dawn of history information has meant data, messages and news. Only recent development in cybernetics has extended its meaning. In cybernetic terms information has a very broad meaning encompassing all external data which can be perceived or transmitted by means of a certain system and data which can be produced within the system.

V.G. Afanasiev defines information as "only messages, knowledge and data, i.e. such knowledge which is required by and targeted to a particular consumer. In its interaction with the consumer this knowledge takes on the form of a message or news, it becomes information. Information is the part of knowledge which is used for orienting to actions, to administration, i.e. for the purpose of preserving qualitative particularity, perfection and development of the system. This knowledge in constant turnover and movement is collected, preserved and processed, transmitted and (potentially) used by the system. In other words, information is an active, "working" part of the reflection of knowledge."[1]

At present there are different concepts of information: statistic, semiotic, combined, etc. The theory of social information stands apart.

The enormous growth of knowledge in the present epoch has been adequately called an "information explosion". This explosion can be regarded as an accumulation of human knowledge and it is regular by nature. In his book "Dialectics of Nature" F. Engels pointed out that the development of science... accelerated, if this expression is allowed, in squared proportion to the distance (in time) from the starting point.

It is not by chance that the information explosion is called an explosion. Studies of the development of science show that the last 65 years have produced 90% of the scientific knowledge accumulated by mankind throughout its history, and 90% of the

people involved in the science during its development are our contemporaries.

The problem of orientation in scientific knowledge and information banks, its review, analysis and evaluation are urgent practical problems today.

The problem of "information explosion" is not limited to problems concerning the "information wave" and orientation to it. We cannot ignore the fact that the present technological progress has brought some changes to our way of thinking, to the very nature of communication.

The social system of a society determines the general quantity, content and ideological orientation of information. Any society has to solve the social question of how to inform and what facts to include in the information. The main content of social information is ideological and political, since ideological and political factors are the basic elements of any social information system. These factors unite every possible variety of social information into a single system with a specific aim.

The circulation of information in society is not a simple process of communication but an ideological and political process of shaping the social position of people, a process of forming a specific public opinion. Thus the basic functions of social information in society are cognitive, regulative and organizing.

The object of public opinion are problems of public interest. The higher the interest of society in solving a particular problem, the more intensive is the flow of information. If a phenomenon of public interest is not reflected in the press, radio or TV, it becomes a source of various rumours filling in the information vacuum. Such rumours are very powerful in shaping public opinion. The result, then, is a different matter. But there is no doubt that public opinion, both genuine and false, needs information both for its formation and for its proper functioning. The atmosphere of information saturation is vital for public opinion.

It is a common practice to stress the role information and

mass media play in public opinion formation and expression. Indeed, we can hardly overestimate this role. Without knowledge of a certain question there is no opinion; it is natural that an event has to be made public before it can affect our views and evaluations. But on the other hand, (and this is often beyond the scope of scientific studies) public opinion itself provokes a flow of information. As public opinion is not able to function properly without a flow of fresh, concrete and empiric information needed for the constant verification and updating of social stands, convictions and views, it inspires information flow and itself is subject to social and psychological factors.

Information is thus not only a means of public opinion formation but also a necessary precondition and form of its existence. In this respect the term "formation" calls for a more precise definition. It would be a misunderstanding to regard the formation of public opinion as achieving a fixed state where no further changes are possible. As the reception of social information is regulated by individual interests, people do not get lost in the jungle. A person looks for and perceives best information that corresponds to his social purposes. However, each contact with new information not only confirms the correctness of the social views of the receiver thus giving him a feeling of satisfaction, not only extends and deepends his ideas of events and facts, but also stimulates his social stand by activating shades and nuances which could gradually introduce significant changes to his original stand and adjust it to new circumstances. This is also true of public opinion.

Thus, when we speak about public opinion formation we refer to a process which after forming new ideas continues to establish them until a public opinion and a demand for solving it have been created. When we say that a public opinion is established, we only mean that the process has reached a relatively steady stage; sometimes changes continue for several years or decades. And the formation of public opinion alone takes its time.

Being dependent on comprehensive information public opinion in turn affects information by its constant demand of new

special data. In other words, by satisfying particular demands information is constantly reproducing them, and this makes public opinion possible. Concrete and empirical information provides the solid basis for the formation and functioning of public opinion.

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